

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's Philosophical Journey

FROM ARISTOTLE'S *METAPHYSICS*
TO THE 'METAPHYSICAL SCIENCE'



BY

CECILIA MARTINI BONADEO

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‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s Philosophical Journey

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‘Metaphysical Science’

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The image comes from a manuscript of the *Maqāmāt* by al-Harīrī (d. 1122), painted in Iraq in the style of the Baghdad School by Yaḥyā ibn Maḥmūd al-Wasiṭī. The manuscript was completed in 1237.

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To my beloved children Anna, Alessandro, and Chiara

Arrivando a ogni nuova città il viaggiatore ritrova un suo passato che non sapeva più d'averne: l'estraneità di ciò che non sei più o non possiedi più t'aspetta al varco nei luoghi estranei e non posseduti.

—Italo Calvino, *Le città invisibili*

Car c'est quasi le même de converser avec ceux des autres siècles que de voyager.

—René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*

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FOREWORD

*'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's Philosophical Journey:
From Aristotle's Metaphysics to the 'Metaphysical Science'*

When 'Abd-al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Baġdādī, a young scholar educated in Arabic grammar and the ancillaries of Islamic law—Koranic studies, and Muslim tradition—left his home town, Baghdad, in the year 1190, for a life-long journey “in quest of knowledge” (*fī ṭalab al-'ilm*) to be acquired from the best teachers of his age, he opened up for himself the universe of the rational sciences of the Ancients. At the age of twenty-seven, he came to Mossul and found a teacher of law well versed in mathematics and fascinated by alchemy. Going on to Damascus, and hence to Cairo, he perfected his studies of Greek philosophy, medicine and the natural sciences to become a true polymath. He met the powerful and the learned in the Ayyūbid capitals, the new centers of Islam rivalling with, and soon eclipsing Baghdad. He studied with the authorities of medical learning who propagated Avicenna's medical teaching as well as his philosophy; but then he made friends with a philosopher who referred him to the original sources of Aristotle and his true interpreters, Greek and Arabic; and in pursuing his relentless quest for learning he went for absolute knowledge: metaphysics. His critical mind, and his continued training in the logic and dialectic of Aristotle, led him to the foundation of Arabic Islamic philosophy achieved by al-Fārābī, conceiving of philosophy as a school of sound reasoning: the science of demonstration. He became a defender of true Aristotelianism and a fierce critic of Avicenna and the growing number of his admirers whom he accused of blind obedience before his assumptions. Invoking the authority of reason, 'Abd-al-Laṭīf refused to accept as a true philosopher one lacking not only true insight, but also a truly moral personality. True philosophy is in the service of religion, verifying both belief and action—apart from this, the philosophers' ambitions are vain.

Metaphysics is the primary focus of Cecilia Martini's study: 'Abd al-Laṭīf's commentary of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, intended as a faithful interpretation of his teaching, and including the writings of such Greek authors as are deemed representative of his doctrine—notably Alexander of Aphrodisias (under whose name, as also under Aristotle's own name, the sources of Arabic Neoplatonism were transmitted). The author is

presenting the history of the *Metaphysica* in Arabic translations, commentaries and systematic approaches, and through a painstaking analysis of ‘Abd-al-Laṭīf’s *Kitāb fi ‘ilm mā ba’d al-ṭabī’a* and his further writings, she has reconstructed the ‘metaphysics corpus’ of early Arabic philosophy, outshone and superseded through the overwhelming success of Avicenna’s writings.

But beyond this contribution to the history of Aristotelian philosophy and its transformation in the Arabic Islamic milieu, it is the remarkable merit of the author of the present study to have retraced for us the life’s journey of ‘Abd-al-Laṭīf in the light of his own autobiographical reports—some of the most remarkable texts of personal history from the Islamic Middle Ages—and at the same time, to have expounded his philosophical and spiritual outlook as a reflection of his age and society. In placing his intellectual journey into context, the present study transcends the limits of an anaemic history of ideas, and has made alive the intellectual networks of teaching and scholarly exchange in Arabic Islamic culture during its final heyday before the Mongol invasion.

The vast learning of ‘Abd-al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī was exemplary, and it was exceptional. He comprised the whole of traditional Islamic education and Arabic erudition, and he encompassed the heritage of the rational sciences of the Greeks. In all of this, he was a critical mind, while revering the Ancients, he refused blind adherence to authority, ancient or ‘modern’. With sharp observation and sober empiricism he confuted many accepted opinions based on the repetition of transmitted doctrine. Metaphysics as a *disciplina* is no more but a school of clear thinking. ‘Abd-al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī shunned the scholasticism of Avicenna’s contemporary readers presuming to integrate philosophical discourse with Ash‘arite Kalām under the roof of the law college. “The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory but an activity” (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, trans. C.K. Ogden, § 4.112).

In this way, the reader will find in *‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s Philosophical Journey* a shining example of Islamic rationalism, brought to bear in sound thought and virtuous action, in a fascinating portrait of one of the luminaries of his age.

Gerhard Endress

INTRODUCTION

‘*Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s Philosophical Journey: From Aristotle’s Metaphysics to the ‘Metaphysical Science’*’ is a study devoted to the Arabic reception of Greek philosophy and metaphysics in Muwaffaq al-Dīn Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf al-Baġdādī (1162–9 November 1231), a later and relatively unknown author of the Arabic-Islamic *falsafa*. In particular, it examines his *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* (*Kitāb fī ‘ilm mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a*), which is a critical work in the process of the Arabic assimilation of Greek thought, demonstrating its author’s acquaintance with the most important Greek metaphysical doctrines.

At the beginning of the Arabic reception of Greek philosophy, Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* was translated multiple times. Then, afterwards, the need arose to rethink the acquired knowledge in an autonomous way. Muslim thinkers felt encouraged to recognize in this new knowledge a consistent theological doctrine compatible with Koranic revelation. A substantial contribution to this process was the fact that the translation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* was accompanied by the translation of other post-Aristotelian Greek works, especially Neoplatonic, which promoted in the Arabic-speaking readers a belief in the substantial unity of Greek cosmology, metaphysics, theology and psychology. For this reason, the text of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* was assimilated selectively: they favoured those books whose content was explicitly aitiological and theological.

This reading was inaugurated by al-Kindī (d. 865 ca). In his work, *On First Philosophy* (*Fī l-Falsafa al-ūlā*), al-Kindī makes use of the *Metaphysics* in a selective way, aiming to expound an ontology (as we would say today) compatible with the Koranic *tawḥīd*. Books *Alpha Elatton*, *Epsilon* and *Lambda* count as the pivot of this selective reception. In addition, the Neoplatonic One appears as identical with the Immobile Mover, thanks to an analysis of the meanings of “one” in Aristotle’s Book *Delta* of the *Metaphysics*, which permits such an identification. Once the Aristotelian rule that forbids an endless succession in the causal series had been accepted, al-Kindī reaches the First Cause, which is the absolute beginning, i.e., the starting point of the eternal movement of the heavens, the absolute One. The Neoplatonic doctrine in which the One transcends every predication is nothing but a consequence of this; al-Kindī does not renounce expressing this topic in the Mu‘tazilite terms of the transcendence of God over all the attributes we can predicate about Him.

Later on, al-Fārābī intended to frame the Aristotelian philosophy according to a new system of sciences, in order to integrate the scientific Greek heritage with the autochthonous sciences of Islamic civilization. It became necessary to grasp clearly the purpose and object of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: in al-Fārābī's eyes, the latter did not equal the science of *tawḥīd*, i.e. apologetical Islamic theology. According to al-Fārābī in *The Aims of Aristotle's Metaphysics* (*Fī aḡrāḍ mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*), the metaphysical science has being *qua* being as its object, and for this reason it also deals with the principle of being, i. e., that principle which is designated by us as God. On that account, al-Fārābī aimed to clarify the relationship between the metaphysical science as rational theology on one hand, and theodicy and *kalām* on the other. The metaphysical science is, in al-Fārābī's view, the universal science: it is at one and the same time first philosophy, ontology and theology. This notion of metaphysics was to count as the starting point of Avicenna's thought, which culminated in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* (*The Healing*), where Avicenna recasts the contents of the *Metaphysics* on the basis of his reshaping of this science in its epistemological role, its method, its subject-matter and its structure.

But starting from the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, that is, from the end of the eleventh century, throughout the twelfth, and up to the beginning of the thirteenth, the production of original philosophical and scientific treatises became dominant and widespread with respect to the study of Greek philosophical and scientific literature in Arabic translation. The claim has been made that this generated a sort of "purist" reaction best exemplified by Averroes and his return to Aristotle and the Greek tradition.¹ Such a phenomenon took place not only in al-Andalus, but also in the East of the Islamic world: Muwaffaq al-Dīn Muḥammad 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf al-Baḡdādī would be the best representative of this current of thought.

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī has been considered a pedantic scholar, whose approach to science and philosophy was scholastic and legalistic rather

¹ This was for many years the view of D. Gutas. See for example Gutas (1998), 153–155, who when speaking about 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī, stated: "the reactionary nature of such attempts, in the face of the great advances of Arabic sciences and philosophy, is evident from the fact that such scholars exercised almost no influence in subsequent Arabic letters". But Gutas (2011), as we will see, strikes a very different chord and here the author 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī becomes quite the opposite of that what was written about him in 1998. It comes as no surprise that Gutas probably only decided to change his mind on this specific topic after reading the Joosse–Pormann article 2010, or even before at the Symposium Graeco-Arabicum (2005) in Bochum, where I discussed with him the paper now published in Martini Bonadeo (2010a).

than experimental and creative. Nevertheless, the interpretative categories of 'purist' and 'compiler' are not suitable for describing the intellectual life of this writer. 'Abd al-Laṭīf cannot count as a supporter of a sort of return to Aristotle or Galen *sic et simpliciter*. True, in his autobiography, he claimed the need to go back to the Greek sources. Still, the reader must go beyond this claim and try to see what corresponds to it in the historical reality of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's sources. In doing so, the reader will realize that 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's sources are by no means the Greek scientific and philosophical ones – they were too far from him – but those produced by the assimilation of the Greek thought in Islamic culture, which were reworked by 'Abd al-Laṭīf in a original vein.

We possess two coeval biographies of him. The first is embedded in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a's biographical work, the *Sources of Information on the Classes of Physicians* (*Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*). The second is another autobiography, still unpublished,² and its title is *Book of Two Pieces of Advice* (*Kitāb al-Naṣīḥatayn*). Finally, further information on 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī can be found in the report of his journey in Egypt entitled *Book of the Report and Account of the Things which I Witnessed and the Events Seen in the Land of Egypt* (*Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-i'tibār fī-l-umūr al-muṣāhada wa-l-ḥawādīṭ al-mu'āyana bi-arḍ miṣr*). From these not wholly concordant texts, elements emerge that shed light on 'Abd al-Laṭīf's activity and philosophical and scientific position between the age of the Ayyūbids and Mameluks. 'Abd al-Laṭīf's activity was often characterized by violent controversies, by the independence of his convictions, slowly-matured, but put forward with passion in his writings, and, finally, by his dedication to different fields of research. We can follow his purposes and interests, the paths of his education (thanks to his lists of the schools he attended, his teachers, of his travels), the library he had at his disposal, his encyclopaedic work on medicine and philosophy and his attitude towards both the ancients philosophers and his contemporaries.

'Abd al-Laṭīf was born in Baghdad in 1162 and died there in 1231 after an absence of forty-five years during which he travelled throughout the Islamic world looking for a good teacher in philosophy with whom he

² *The Book of Two Pieces of Advice* was actually edited by Mr. Enes Tas in his masters degree study entitled Abdüllatif el-Baġdādī'nin Kitabü'n-Nasihateyn adli eseri: *tahkikli neşir ve muhteva analizi*, directed by Prof. Dr. Yaşar Aydınli at the Uludağ Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı, İslam Felsefesi Bilim Dalı, Bursa 2011. I thank Dr. Veysel Kaya who sent to me this edition. Unfortunately I received it when this book was already in proofs.

could resolve the problems generated in him by his reading of the works of Avicenna and those on alchemy. We know that he received a solid education in Islamic sciences, including grammar, lexicography and law, and then he turned to natural sciences, medicine, philosophy and, critically, to alchemy. His spasmodic search for a teacher in philosophy brought him to meet, directly or through their writings, Avicenna, al-Ġazālī and al-Suhrawardī. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf had many patrons and came into contact with many of the most important men of his era: scholars, philosophers, physicians and leaders, including Saladin and his secretary, ‘Imād al-Dīn al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī, Maimonides, and Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk. Many schools’ teachers weighed heavily on his education and in many different environments: Baghdad, Mossul, Aleppo, Damascus, the centres in Anatolia, and, most of all, Cairo.

Cairo represented for ‘Abd al-Laṭīf the much-desired goal of his pilgrimage, the place where he finally met Aristotle and his philosophy, and that of his commentators Themistius and Alexander, and where he finally met the greatest Arabic Aristotelian commentator of the East, al-Fārābī, who was the first to succeed in integrating Islamic and Greek knowledge and in justifying a new system of the sciences. For ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, the experience of Cairo also meant the progressive abandonment of Avicenna’s philosophy, which, during the years of his education, he had held to be the only one possible, and which, after his adhesion to the peripatetic tradition, he vehemently criticised.

‘Abd al-Laṭīf was a versatile scholar and a prodigious writer: he wrote several medical and philosophical treatises, still little studied up to now. Many of his works are still in manuscript form, and in this case the precise whereabouts of only few manuscripts in the various libraries of the Near East, Asia, and Europe are known. The oldest list of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s works is that given by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a at the end of his biography of our author. A second, later, list is found in the *Fawāt al-wafayāt* by Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī. The list presented by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a numbers almost two-hundred works, including brief essays and treatises. The subjects are extremely varied and reflect the variety of our author’s interests. Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī’s list numbers fifteen discourses by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, which are not mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a and eighty-one works, all mentioned, with the exception of one in the previous list. Besides these works other very important treatises are preserved – among the *Kitāb al-Naṣīhatayn* already mentioned – in the miscellaneous manuscript *Hüseyin Çelebi*, 823, discovered in Bursa in 1959 by Stern, which he later described. From an analysis of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s enormous number of works, we derive the

idea that he never held Islamic knowledge to be in contradiction with the knowledge of the Ancients; indeed, he thought that critical awareness of the appropriate method for the science under examination came to the scholar of the Koranic sciences precisely from knowledge of the Ancients. His criticisms of Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī can be explained in this sense: this latter was not only unable to tackle the study of the science of the Ancients, and in particular medicine, because he did not have properties of language and method, but also precisely because he had no didactic competence and method, he should not even have set out to tackle the sacred text of the Koran.

‘Abd al-Laṭīf constantly held authors defined by him as “the moderns” distinct from the Ancients and he unleashed a harsh polemic attack against the works of the former. His privileged targets were Avicenna and Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. The writings of these authors in fact, if compared with those of the Ancients on similar themes, reveal their low scientific level, are confused, and lack detailed analysis, as can be seen in the criticisms of Avicenna’s logical writings. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf maintained the need, therefore, to return to the books of the Ancients, and in particular, those of Hippocrates and Galen in medicine and those of Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias and al-Fārābī in philosophy.

As far as medicine is concerned, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf criticizes Avicenna and Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and wishes for a return to Hippocrates and Galen. He was an active promoter of this return: from the list of his works he seems to have commented on or summarised many of Hippocrates’ and Galen’s writings. Nevertheless, he was not a sterile compiler of the medical works of the Ancients, but knew how to unite the knowledge derived from them to his own talent at observation, as we can see from his treatise on diabetes, in which he follows all that has been written by ancient and Arabic authors on its cure by a description of the symptomatology of the illness. Another example of this attitude can be found in the last chapter of the *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-i’tibār*, where he discusses the bone structure of the lower jawbone and corrects Galen’s opinion that it was made up of two bones instead of one, and then discusses the sacrum-coccyx complex which, according to Galen, was made up of six bones, while ‘Abd al-Laṭīf held it to be formed by a single bone.

‘Abd al-Laṭīf was profoundly adverse to alchemy, which was much in vogue in his time. It can in no way be placed in the system of the sciences. Alchemy and its false presumptions must be distinguished from scientific knowledge, which can be given a rational basis, such as mathematics, mineralogy, chemistry, zoology, and botany. Proof of this is than the

Ancients never spoke of it. Alchemy is guilty of having waylaid generations of scholars.

His stay in Cairo, as was said before, gave him a profound knowledge of the philosophy of Aristotle and his interpreters. From the list of his works, in fact, he seems to have written treatises which cover the entire Aristotelian corpus. There is also frequent mention of the treatises of Alexander of Aphrodisias, a writer who was a point of reference for ‘Abd al-Laṭīf. The same can be said of al-Fārābī, the only philosopher of the Islamic age deemed worthy of study by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf. Al-Fārābī’s writings were paraphrased by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf and inserted into his own. The very notion of science which transpires from the work of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, namely, a systematic corpus capable of integrating Islamic and ancient knowledge, is derived from al-Fārābī.

In ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s system of sciences, the metaphysical science to which one of his main works is devoted, the *Kitāb fī ‘Ilm mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a*, owes its leading role to the fact that it examines beings *qua* beings, it demonstrates the principles of particular sciences, and it inquires into the first principle: it is ontology, universal science, first philosophy and theology combined.

‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s concept of *Metaphysics* as a science results from the uninterrupted model of reception, assimilation and transformation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* in the Arabic-speaking world. His *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*, in fact, cannot be understood without bearing in mind al-Kindī’s model of reception of the *Metaphysics* with the focus on its aetiological and theological books and the attention paid by al-Fārābī to metaphysics as ontology and universal science. In ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s work, the Kindian and Farabian models of the metaphysical science which survived Avicenna’s *Ilāhiyyāt* are combined with each other in order to provide a clear and comprehensive account of what one should consider as a fully-fledged metaphysical system. For ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, the metaphysical science counts as an autonomous discipline: it is not only *‘ilm kullī*, nor only *‘ilm ilāhī*, but *‘ilm mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a*, ontology and theology together. In his companion, the *Metaphysics* is less a text, transmitted through a chain of historical stages, than a discipline to be learnt under the guidance of several teachers, all of them following Aristotle and contributing to the understanding his doctrines: Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, Proclus, al-Kindī and al-Fārābī.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE TRADITION OF ARISTOTLE'S *METAPHYSICS* IN THE MUSLIM EAST

The transmission of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is a crucial issue for the history of ancient, medieval and renaissance philosophy. A number of important studies, which have been published since the end of the nineteenth century, have inquired exhaustively into the making of the Aristotelian *corpus* and its organization by Andronicus of Rhodes in the first century BC. They have also investigated the Greek commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* of the Imperial ages – in particular the exegesis produced within the Neoplatonic schools – and the Greek-Latin translations.

More recent investigations which are not yet complete have been devoted to the Greek-Arabic transmission of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Baghdad, during the first two centuries of the 'Abbāsid caliphate (ninth – eleventh centuries AD). They have also inquired into Avicenna's reception and Averroes' commentaries on the *Metaphysics*, and finally also the medieval Arabic-Latin translations, which were diffused into European universities from the first decades of the thirteenth century onwards.¹

Another open field is the reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the Muslim East at the time of the strong reaction both in favour and against Avicenna's philosophy and the concomitant rediscovery of the science of metaphysics from the end of the twelfth century in the schools of Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus, in a what was by then an active atmosphere which combined metaphysical and theological doctrines within *falsafa*; it last until the seventeenth century.²

This book is devoted to the 'Metaphysical Science' proposed by Muwaffaq al-Dīn Muḥammad 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf al-Baġdādī (1162–9 November 1231), a little known author of later *falsafa*. His *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* (*Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*) proves to be a central piece, not only for obtaining a better insight into the Arabic tradition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, but also for acquiring a better understanding of

¹ See Booth (1983); Bertolacci (2006); the volume of *Medioevo. Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale*, 32 (2007) dedicated to Arabic-Islamic Metaphysics, which I edited; Arnzen (2010); Arnzen (2010a).

² See Janssens (2007); Janssens (2010); Eichner (2007); Arnzen (2007); Adamson (2011).

the nature of metaphysical science in the East of the Islamic world. A reading of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* suggests that one should reject an idea which has gained wide currency, namely, that after Avicenna philosophy came to an end, surviving only in al-Andalus.

The metaphysical work by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf al-Baġdādī offers an example of striking consistency with the original metaphysical project elaborated at the beginning of *falsafa* by al-Kindī in his *On First Philosophy* (*Fī l-Falsafa al-Ūlā*). This project was subsequently endorsed and revised by the scholars of the tenth century Aristotelian circle in Baghdad, mostly by al-Fārābī. The last three *Enneads* by Plotinus – translated by Ibn Nā’ima al-Ḥimṣī and then known as the so-called *Theology* of Aristotle – and Proclus’ *Elements of Theology* were conceived of, in al-Kindī’s circle, as the natural development of *Metaphysics Lambda* in a synthesis of Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism fitting with Islamic theology and its demanding monotheism.

The *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* resembles a school textbook: in it, the *Metaphysics* is less of a text, transmitted through a chain of historical stages, and more of a discipline: this discipline is meant to find its final and definitive fully-fledged form in the synthesis of the metaphysical doctrines expounded by Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, Plotinus, Proclus, al-Kindī and al-Fārābī.

The *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* finds itself at the end of an uninterrupted process of translation, reception and transformation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* in the Arabic-speaking world. Conclusions on the peculiar features of this work, its degree of originality with respect to the previous tradition of Aristotelian thought, and its systematic organization of concepts, therefore depend on the careful analysis and reconstruction of this process. The “Aristotle” of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī is in fact a “virtual Aristotle”, as G. Endress accurately puts it, the Aristotle built up by *falsafa* in a development of no less than four centuries.

In this chapter, I will present the framework within which ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s metaphysical work should be considered, through a survey of the translations, the commentaries and the works of the Hellenizing Arabs which formed both the direct and indirect Arabic tradition of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. I will first provide an overview of the Greek tradition of this Aristotelian treatise, that is, the making of the *Metaphysics* as a unitary monograph, as well as an overview of the Greek commentaries. Then I will consider the first stage of the translation and reception of the *Metaphysics* in the Arabic-speaking world, paying special attention to the translators, to al-Kindī (795–865) and his treatise *On First Philosophy* together with

some of his metaphysical and cosmological writings, and to Tābit ibn Qurra (836–901) and his *Concise Exposition of Lambda*. I will then deal with the assimilation and adoption of the text of the *Metaphysics* in the Peripatetic circle of Baghdad during the tenth century, through an analysis of some writings by al-Fārābī (870–951), and the commentary on *Alpha Elatton* by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (893–974). Finally, I will focus on Avicenna's metaphysical training, his own contribution to metaphysics, and the different reactions to his thought in the post-Avicennian philosophical tradition in the East.

1. *On the Greek Tradition of Metaphysics*

The study *Essai sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote* by F. Ravaisson (1937–1846),³ C.A. Brandis' works on the ancient *scolia* to Aristotle's text, and Bonitz's *Index aristotelicus*,⁴ have established that, on the basis of the testimonies of the ancient commentators, the fourteen books which form the *Metaphysics* did not constitute a literary unit, but are the result of editorial work ascribed to the Peripatetician Andronicus of Rhodes (middle first century BC).⁵

From Plutarch's *Sulla*⁶ we only know that Andronicus came into possession of a collection of Aristotle's school writings. In addition, it is well-known that Aristotle composed some "lecture-notes", which circulated in a few copies and included notes of the different courses given by Aristotle himself in Plato's Academy and in his Peripatos.⁷

³ Ravaisson (1953).

⁴ *Aristotelis Opera ex recensione Immanuelis Bekkeri* edita Academia Regia Borussica, Berolini 1831–1870. In 1960 a new edition of this work was by O. Gigon: *Aristotelis Opera ex rec. Immanuelis Bekkeri*, ed. Acad. Regia Borussica 2. ed. accedunt fragmenta, scholia, Index Aristotelicus/addendis instruxit fragmentorum collectionem retractavit O. Gigon, W. De Gruyter, Berolini-New York 1960. The first two volumes are the same as the first edition (photostatic reproduction, 1960, 1970²); the third volume contains the fragments of the lost works, but in a new completely revised edition by Gigon (1987); in the fourth there is the *Aristotelis Vita Marciana* edited by Gigon and a fifth-century AD Greek biography of Aristotle (1961); the fifth volume reproduces the *Index* (photostatic reproduction, 1961).

⁵ Recently Menn (1995), 202–208, has speculatively argued on the basis of the same sources that we were not informed that the editors brought the fourteen books of the *Metaphysics* into their present arrangement after Aristotle's death, but only that the editors received from Aristotle fourteen books of *Metaphysics* in their current order (except possibly for α or A), and that, perhaps to repair some damage, they made local changes which did not affect the overall structure.

⁶ Plutarque, *Vie de Sylla*, 26. 2–6 Flacelière–Chambray.

⁷ Zeller (1963), 109–154, first distinguished Aristotle's writings according to their destination into works which were widely diffused, often in dialogical form and "lecture-notes".

In a famous passage of Porphyry's *Vita Plotini*,⁸ we are told that Andronicus decided to collect related materials – *πραγματεία*⁹ – into one whole. Andronicus also composed a systematic catalogue, a *πίναξ* of Aristotle's works which he knew, adding some notes about the classification and the authenticity of the works he mentioned.¹⁰

From the days of Aristotle's teaching to those of Andronicus' "edition" or "divulgateion"¹¹ – followed by the activity of the commentators who secured the circulation of Aristotle's philosophy – three centuries passed. Concerning this period it is extremely difficult to disentangle the history of the transmission of Aristotle's text from legend.¹² A persistent problem is to determine to what extent the *Metaphysics*, as we know it, corresponds to what Aristotle taught and wrote.

The first century BC geographer, Strabo, and Plutarch, in his biography of Sulla, inform us about the transfer of Aristotle's library, after Theophrastus' death (287 BC), to Scepsis in Troads, as the inheritance of Theophrastus' disciple Neleus. Neleus' un-philosophical descendants locked the books in a tunnel to secure them from the Attalids' love of books. The damaged books were published only at the beginning of the first century BC by Apellicon of Teos¹³ in Athens. Subsequently, the library was transferred to Rome where it was taken in hand by Tyrannio.¹⁴

The term "lecture-notes", coined by Jaeger (1912), 148–163, precisely designates the school writings of Aristotle, that is to say, those writings like the collections of Ionic *λόγοι*, which did not completely slip out of the author's hands, but which were constantly revised and intended to be read by a limited range of readers. See Dorandi (2000), 161–163. According to Verdenius (1985), 12–21, the circulation of the esoteric writings in the Peripatos explains the fact that in these writings there is an alternation of clear and detailed expressions, on one hand, and obscure passages on the other hand.

⁸ Porphyry *Vita Plotini* 24.1–17 CNRS. In this passage, in which he presents himself as the organizer of Plotinus' *Enneads*, Porphyry tells his readers that Plotinus himself entrusted him with the task of preparing the edition of his writings, but without indicating any example to follow. Porphyry decided to take two good existing editions as models: Epicharmus' comic operas written by Apollodorus of Athens and the edition of Aristotle's writings by Andronicus of Rhodes.

⁹ Cf. Porphyry *Vita Plotini*, 24.10 CNRS; M.O. Goulet-Cazé on page 297 points to the difficulty of perfectly determining the meaning of this term.

¹⁰ Plutarque, *Vie de Sylla*, 26.6–10 Flacelière–Chambry; Moraux (1973), t. I, 59–94.

¹¹ Barnes (1997), 28–31, wonders whether Andronicus produced a canonical edition or simply published the copies of the corrupt manuscripts he secured from Tyrannio.

¹² Moraux (1951), 1.

¹³ Goulet (1989), 266–267.

¹⁴ Cf. Gottschalk (1987), 1079–1174. Gottschalk carefully studied the role played by Tyrannio, the famous grammarian from Amisus. This admirer of Aristotle, taken to Rome as a prisoner in the Second Mithridatic War, was admitted to Sulla's library and organized the Aristotelian school writings before passing them to Andronicus. Gottschalk

Andronicus bought Aristotle's works from this grammarian. Strabo and Plutarch agree in saying that after Theophrastus the ancient Peripatetics did not know the whole teaching of Aristotle or his metaphysical thought, because they could not have had initial access to his school writings and, subsequently, they could only have studied them in bad copies.¹⁵

J. Barnes took these testimonies into account once again, trying to determine the reliability of Strabo's report.¹⁶ The latter as well as Plutarch's, have been considered plausible by Jaeger¹⁷ and by Wehrli, who claimed in his famous *Die Schule des Aristoteles* that Strabo was probably the last Peripatetician who had at his disposal the school writings of Aristotle.¹⁸

In 1936 E. Bignone had already pointed out that Epicurus, who lived in Athens around 323 BC, criticized Aristotle's doctrines contained in the dialogues such as the *Eudemus* and the *Protrepticus*, but did not take into account the *De Anima*, *Ethics*, or the *Metaphysics*. In addition, the Epicureans confused the Academy and the Peripatetics: this would have been impossible if they had been aware of Aristotle's anti-Platonic position in the esoteric writings.¹⁹

Another Italian scholar, C. Diano, maintained a different opinion. He argued that Epicurus was dependent on Aristotle's esoteric treatises both in terminology and contents.²⁰ It is thus not necessary to assume the complete disappearance of the school writings in the tunnel of Scepis to explain their lack of importance in the Hellenistic age. At variance with both Bignone and Diano, P. Moraux suggested that in an age devoted to the cult of style the unpublished Aristotelian treatises might have looked too difficult and not suitable either for Aristotle's followers or his critics.²¹

Moreover, E. Zeller questioned Strabo's tenet that Rome was the only centre of diffusion of Aristotle's works. According to Zeller, several copies of Aristotle's school writings (or some of them) had been made and

wondered why Tyrannio gave Aristotle's books to Andronicus before publishing them. His tentative response was that Tyrannio probably realized that the edition of the works of such a philosopher required a deeper knowledge of his thought.

¹⁵ Strabo, *Geography*, 13.1. 54 Jones; Plutarch, *Vie de Sylla*, 26.10–17 Flacelière–Chambry.

¹⁶ Barnes (1997), 1–69.

¹⁷ Jaeger (1923).

¹⁸ Wehrli (1952). By comparing Strabo's fragments (head of the Peripatos 288–284 BC) and the works of the subsequent Peripateticians (Lycon, Ariston of Ceos, Ieronimus, Diodorus and Critolaus), Wehrli was in a position to establish that these later Peripatetics read and used the dialogues, but not the esoteric writings.

¹⁹ Bignone (1936).

²⁰ Diano (1974).

²¹ Moraux (1951), 3–4.

became available not only in Athens, but also in the libraries of Alexandria and Rhodes.²²

As for Rhodes, Asclepius (sixth century AD) refers to the fact that Aristotle sent a copy of the *Metaphysics* to Eudemus of Rhodes, one of his companions. Eudemus decided not to publish so long a treatise (ἐκδοθῆναι εἰς πολλοὺς τηλικαύτην πραγματείαν).²³ This was perhaps the only copy of the *Metaphysics* before Andronicus' edition, since there is no mention of it in the catalogues of the library of Alexandria, nor in the library of Theophrastus in Athens.²⁴

As for Alexandria, we are told in the introductory pages of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists* (end of the 2nd and beginning of the 3rd century), that Larensius²⁵ had an extensive library, surpassing all the great libraries of the past, including those of Aristotle the philosopher, Theophrastus and Neleus. Athenaeus goes on to say that the king, Ptolemy Philadelphus, bought all of Aristotle and Theophrastus' books from Neleus and took them to Alexandria, along with the books from Athens and Rhodes.²⁶ This testimony seems to be confirmed by al-Fārābī's lost writing *On the Appearance of Philosophy* (*Fī zuhūr al-falsafa*) reported by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a in his *Sources of Information on the Classes of Physicians* (*ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fī tabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*, thirteenth century).²⁷

²² Zeller (1963), II, 2, 138–154; Barnes (1997), 14–16, follows in Zeller's footsteps.

²³ Asclepii *In Aristotelis Metaphysicorum Libros A-Z Commentaria*, CAG VI 2, 4, 4–16. Cf. the analysis of this testimony in Dorandi (2002), 44–47.

²⁴ In the past, the so-called *Metaphysics* by Theophrastus had been considered by scholars as a fragment of a critical work against Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and its composition has been placed after Aristotle's death (322 BC): cf. Ross–Fobes (1929); Regenbogen (1940), 1389–1395; Tricot (1948); Theiler (1958), 85–105; Reale (1964); English trans. in Reale (1977); Van Raalte (1988), 189–215; Romani (1994), 12. This date implied that Theophrastus had knowledge of the *Metaphysics*, even if not in its entirety, as is shown by his complete ignorance of the doctrine of substance and of being *qua* being: cf. Reale (1964), 128, 140–147. Recently, the strict polemical parallelism between Theophrastus' *Metaphysics* and the Academic doctrine of the first principles has been observed and it has been convincingly maintained that Theophrastus' *Metaphysics* was written at the same time as the more ancient parts of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, before Speusippus' death (338 BC): cf. Krämer (1973), 206–214; Gaiser (1985). So Theophrastus possibly knew part of Aristotle's work: for instance, book B – which provided him with the model of the aporias dealt with in his own *Metaphysics* – and probably also A: cf. Frede (1971), 65–79; Devereux (1988), 167–188. Today scholars agree that Theophrastus' *Metaphysics* was composed at the very beginning of Aristotle's teaching in Athens (335–323 BC): cf. Most (1988), 224–233; Laks–Most (1993), 14–15; Berti (2002), 339–356. Gutas (2010), 3–9, suggests an earlier date of composition between 347 and 334.

²⁵ Stein (1926), 884–885.

²⁶ Cf. Barnes (1997), 5–7.

²⁷ Cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fī tabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*, II, 134.30–135.24 Müller; notes 147, 148.

The ancient catalogues of Aristotle's writings show us an insight into the diffusion of Aristotle's works before Andronicus' editorial work.²⁸ The three most ancient catalogues have been edited and studied by I. Düring.²⁹ They have come down to us in Diogenes Laertius's biography (third century AD),³⁰ in the anonymous *Vita Menagiana*, traceable back to the *Onomatologos* of Hesychius of Miletus (fifth-sixth centuries AD), and finally, in an Arabic translation. We find this Arabic translation namely, in a bio-bibliographical work on Aristotle which contains his life and the catalogue of his works, ascribed to a certain *Baṭlamīyūs al-Ġarīb*, Ptolemy the stranger,³¹ probably a fourth-century teacher of Aristotle's philosophy.³²

The Arabic text seems to originate in a Greek antecedent, which is lost to us, through a Syriac version and is preserved, probably in its entirety,³³ only in the eighteenth century manuscript İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Aya Sofya* 4833, as pointed out by M. Mahdi.³⁴ An external confirmation is available: essential parts of this text, such as the catalogue of Aristotle's writings, are quoted in the abridged version by al-Zawzanī of Ibn al-Qiftī's bio-bibliographical work, the *History of Learned Men* (*Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*)³⁵ and in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a's *Sources of Information on the Classes of Physicians*.³⁶

The catalogue which Diogenes transmitted raises many more problems. It mentions only a few of the treatises which today form the *corpus*, even though thanks to Moraux's work we know that a lot of Aristotle's school works are mentioned in it, albeit under different titles with respect to the current ones.

On one hand, scholars agree that the list testifies to a *corpus* antedating the first century BC; on the other hand, the authorship is a much more

²⁸ Cf. Moraux (1951).

²⁹ Düring (1957); Goulet (1989), 424–434; Nancy (2003), 224–229.

³⁰ Diogenes Laertii *Vitae Philosophorum* V. 22–27 Long. Cf. Schwartz (1903), 738–763; Gigante (1986), 7–102; Mejer (1992), 3556–3602 and in particular 3574–3576; Mejer (1994), 824–833.

³¹ Cf. Baffioni (1976), 83–114; Gutas (1986), 15–36. Cf. Aouad (1989b), 415–417.

³² Plezia (1975), 37–42; Plezia (1985), 1–11; Plezia (1986), 383–385, thinks that this Ptolemy is neither Ptolemy Chennos (first century), nor the Neoplatonist Ptolemy mentioned by Iamblichus, Proclus and Priscian. The two were one and the same person for Düring (1971), 264–269. On the contrary, according to Plezia, the Ptolemy alluded to by the Arabic source was a professor of Aristotelianism, who lived not before the fourth century.

³³ Cf. Plezia (1975), (1985), (1986).

³⁴ Al-Fārābī, *Philosophy of Aristotle*, 26 Mahdi; for the description of the manuscript cf. 26–29. The dedicatory letter to Gallus and the list of Aristotle's works have been edited by Hein (1985), 388–444.

³⁵ Al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 27–53 Lippert.

³⁶ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, I.66–69 Müller.

debated question. Paying attention to the systematic order (which echoes the division of Aristotle's philosophy in logic, practical and theoretical philosophy)³⁷ rather than to the alphabetical order of the catalogue,³⁸ Moraux argued that it came from the Lyceum library and that it was the work of Ariston of Ceos, a Peripatetician of the end of the third century BC.³⁹ Moraux therefore parted company with the alleged attribution of the catalogue to Hermippus (end of the third century BC).⁴⁰ According to a colophon of Theophrastus' *Metaphysics*, Hermippus, an Alexandrian librarian, who was a disciple of Callimachus, composed the list of Theophrastus' works mentioned in Diogenes.⁴¹ On this basis, some scholars have come to the conclusion that *all* the lists transmitted through Diogenes – included that of Aristotle's works – had been taken from Hermippus' works.⁴²

The problem was re-opened by R. Blum in his book on Callimachus.⁴³ According to Blum, the fact that Diogenes' bibliography contained the complete list of Aristotle's works was demonstrated by stichometric indication of the number of lines; therefore, the lack of some important treatises – for instance, the books on First Philosophy – can be explained only through a natural loss. In addition, the presence of some school writings of little interest, which nobody would have copied for their own sake, demonstrates, according to Blum, that this bibliographical work was drawn directly from the original works mentioned in the list. Blum concluded that Hermippus had drawn up the list in Alexandria on the basis of the exemplars of Aristotle himself, at the moment when the library bought his writings. Today its attribution to Hermippus is almost unanimously accepted, and it has also been considered plausible by Moraux.⁴⁴ Besides, Düring admitted that Hermippus could have taken some materials from a work by Ariston, part of the so-called "collection of Ceos" (Diogenes V, 64).⁴⁵

³⁷ Cf. *Metaph.* a 1, 993 b 20–21; E 1,1025 b 18–25.

³⁸ Diels (1975), 59–80, made a similar remark and claimed that the order of the list points to a specialist of Aristotle's thought: he attributed the work to Andronicus.

³⁹ Cf. Caujolle-Zaslavsky–Goulet (1989), 398–400.

⁴⁰ Cf. Schneider (2000), 655–658.

⁴¹ Diogenis Laertii *Vitae Philosophorum*, V. 36–57 Long.

⁴² Düring (1956), 11–21.

⁴³ Blum (1977), 109–132.

⁴⁴ Moraux (1986), 127–147 and especially 130; Bollansée (1999), Bollansée–Schepens (1999).

⁴⁵ Düring (1956). In the same year, Masellis (1956), 337–363, paying attention to the order and the contents of the writing of this catalogue, concluded that Crates of Mallus (second century BC) composed it, and not Ariston or Hermippus. There is no scholarly consensus on this.

The second catalogue⁴⁶ transmitted in the anonymous *Vita Menagiana*, which traces back to the *Onomatologos* of Hesychius of Miletus (fifth-sixth centuries AD) is composite: one part derives from the same tradition as the list in Diogenes – but is more complete than Diogenes' list itself – whereas a second part is a later addition.

The third catalogue, preserved in the manuscript İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Aya Sofya* 4833 and in Ibn al-Qiftī and Ibn Abī Uşaybi'a's bio-bibliographical works, testifies to a different status of the corpus with respect to that of the other two – it points to the first century. Barnes maintains that in Ptolemy's list there is a consistent group of writings (titles 29–56), which include most of the items of the modern canon of Aristotle's writings except for few cases, the most significant of which is the lack of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The order of Aristotle's writings followed by Ptolemy in his list corresponds to that recommended in Late Antiquity by the Neoplatonic commentators (Ammonius, *In Cat.*, 6. 5–9): they list in sequence logic, ethics including politics, poetics and rhetoric, physics, psychology, biology and, finally, metaphysics.⁴⁷ So, if Ptolemy's *corpus* derives from Andronicus – as is maintained by many scholars on the basis of the fact that Ptolemy read and used Andronicus⁴⁸ – Andronicus is actually the Peripatetician who planned *grosso modo* the modern canon of Aristotle's writings.⁴⁹

Let us now compare the three catalogues. The *Metaphysics* does not appear as such in the catalogue by Diogenes, although in the place should have been, there is a gap of five titles which therefore suggests that it was mentioned.⁵⁰ Anyway, it seems possible to recognize in it book Δ, *περὶ τῶν ποσοπῶς λεγομένων*, among the works on dialectics⁵¹ and, probably, as Moraux tentatively supposed,⁵² book E 1 or K 7, *περὶ ἐπιστημῶν*, book Γ 1, *περὶ ἐπιστήμης*, book Λ or Γ 3–8, *περὶ ἀρχῆς*.⁵³

On the contrary, we find the *Metaphysics* mentioned twice in Hesychius' list. First comes the indication *μεταφυσικά κ'*, in ten books. Some scholars

⁴⁶ See the new critical edition in Dorandi (2006), 87–106.

⁴⁷ Barnes (1997), 31–32.

⁴⁸ Howald (1920), 204–221; Moraux (1951), 306–310.

⁴⁹ Barnes (1997), 33–39.

⁵⁰ Moraux (1951), 314.

⁵¹ Cf. Berti (1977), 51–72; Berti (1987), 11–31. On page 18, Berti thinks that the title number 63 in Diogenes' list (*Μαθηματικὸν ἄ*), number 93 (*περὶ τῆς Σπενσίππου καὶ Θενοκράτους ἄ*), number 96 (*πρὸς τὰ Θενοκράτους ἄ*), number 111 (*περὶ μονάδος ἄ*) – independent treatises in Moraux's opinion – could be taken into account as probable testimonies of books M and N.

⁵² Cf. Moraux (1951), 46 and 83–84.

⁵³ Diogenis Laertii *Vitae Philosophorum*, V. 22.28, 22.18, 23.4, 23.5 Long.

see in this list all the current books (B, Γ, E, Z, H, Θ, I, M, N) except one of the first two (A ο α) and without Δ, K and Λ, which circulated independently;⁵⁴ for others, this reference to the *Metaphysics* is only a later interpolation. The second mention of the *Metaphysics* in Hesychius' list is τῆς μεταφυσικά ι' which must be corrected in ιγ' (13) and probably indicates all the books of the *Metaphysics* except *Alpha Elatton*. This second mention appears in a sort of appendix and is, according to Düring, a later addition.⁵⁵

Finally, the *Metaphysics* is known by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a as a work comprising 13 books – all the current books without one of the first two, which, as is well-known, are both numbered with the letter A, and one of which was probably inserted at a later date.⁵⁶

From this comparison we can say that the *Metaphysics* was available in a library of the third century BC, even if it was in a different form from the present one,⁵⁷ as Jaeger and Moraux have argued,⁵⁸ and that it was not put together for the first time by Andronicus, as maintained by Gigon and Düring.⁵⁹

According to Jaeger, in fact, some of Aristotle's λόγοι on the First Philosophy could have been collected before Andronicus' work – probably in the second century BC – in the *Peripatos* or in Alexandria. The books Δ, K and Λ were excluded from this first collection; they were independent in their circulation and were added only afterwards by Andronicus, as we see in Ptolemy's catalogue. Book α could have been added even later: it appears in its present position in the commentary on the *Metaphysics* by Alexander of Aphrodisias. Moraux, however, thought that if the *Metaphysics* was found only in the catalogue transmitted by Hesychius and not in that by Diogenes, this was due to accidental reasons: during the transmission of the list the title would have been lost.

According to Gigon, on the other hand, the *Metaphysics* was put together by Andronicus in Rome in the first century BC. Düring also credited Andronicus with creating the order of the *Metaphysics*. He based himself

⁵⁴ Cf. Jaeger (1912), 177–180; Moraux (1951), 196–197, 279. According to Düring (1968), 272, on the other hand, this reference to the *Metaphysics* is only a later interpolation.

⁵⁵ Cf. Düring (1957), 90.

⁵⁶ On the first two books of the *Metaphysics* cf. Berti (1982), 5–38; Vuillemin-Diem (1983), 157–192; Mattock (1989), 73–102; Biesterfeldt (1995), 137–192; Martini Bonadeo (2002), 75–112; Martini Bonadeo (2001), 173–206; Hecquet-Devienne (2004), 413–441.

⁵⁷ Moraux (1951), 314–316; Reiner (1954), 210–237; Moraux (1973), 3–32.

⁵⁸ Jaeger (1912), 177–180; Moraux (1951), 311–321.

⁵⁹ Gigon (1961), 40–52; Düring (1968), 272–273.

essentially on the fact that this work is not quoted in the Hellenistic catalogue, even though he admits that it is possible that some copies of the still scattered λόγοι were taken to the library of Alexandria during Theophrastus' lifetime, when in 306 BC Strato of Lampsachos and Demetrius of Phaleron (direct disciples of Aristotle) accepted the invitation of king Ptolemy Soter to found a Peripatetic school in Egypt.

Such are, in short, the main steps in the reconstruction of the tradition of the *Metaphysics* before the editorial work by Andronicus, which counted as the remote antecedent of the exegeses of the *Metaphysics* from the Imperial Age onwards.⁶⁰

Moraux has distinguished two stages in the history of the exegesis on Aristotle.⁶¹ The former was the stage of orthodoxy, which lasted up to Alexander of Aphrodisias. This period was marked in Moraux's eyes by a respect for the letter of Aristotle's writings and their defence against the criticisms of the two main competing philosophical schools – Platonism and Stoicism.⁶² The second stage was that of the Neoplatonic commentators (Porphyry, Iamblichus, Themistius, Plutarch of Athens, Syrianus, Proclus, Ammonius, Damascius, Philoponus, Simplicius, Olympiodorus, Elias and David).⁶³ Beginning with Porphyry, these commentators tried to reconcile Platonic philosophy with Aristotelian philosophy, and they transmitted Aristotelian thought to Byzantine culture. After a long period of decay, in Byzantium the patriarch Photius promoted a renaissance of Aristotelian studies in the ninth century, which had as a permanent result

⁶⁰ Luna (2003), 249–258, in particular page 249, maintains that some exegetical practise of the *Metaphysics* was in use before Andronicus' edition in the first century BC. with Eudorus of Alexandria.

⁶¹ Moraux (1970), 13–40.

⁶² Moraux (1970), 17–20. The Stoics, who had assumed some Aristotelian doctrines as their own, returned to Aristotle in order to criticize him during the second century BC. It is true that some Stoics presented themselves as commentators on the *Categories*, but they did so aiming to show the weak points of Aristotle's logic more than to try to make Aristotle's teaching accessible. For the Platonist, the situation is more complicated: on one hand, we can observe a strict observance of Plato's doctrines, which leads to a rejection of those aspects of Aristotelianism which are irreconcilable with Plato's thought. This is the case for instance of Atticus in the second century BC and that of Plotinus one century later. Plotinus in fact uses Aristotle's texts or those of Aristotle's commentators with the aim to clarify his own position as best as possible. On the other, we recognize an attempt to find a link between the two philosophical traditions: Alcinous in the *Didaskalikos*, for instance, presents a logic with Aristotelian roots as a Platonic logic.

⁶³ Cf. Seeck (1914), 645–651; Dillon (2000), 824–836; Stegemann (1934), 1642–1680; Beutler (1951), 962–975; Praechter (1932), 1728–1775; Beutler (1957), 186–247; Freudenthal (1894), 1863–1865; Saffrey–Mahé (1989), 168–170; Kroll (1901), 2039–2042; Hoffmann (1994), 541–593; Kroll (1916), 1764–1795; Praechter (1927), 204–213; Beutler (1939), 207–227; Chase (2003), 113–121; Luna (2003).

the transmission of the manuscripts of the *corpus*: some of the ninth century manuscripts of Aristotle have come down to us.⁶⁴

After Andronicus, between the first century BC and the third century AD, in the so called stage of “orthodoxy”, the main focus was on the word-by-word explanation of the Aristotelian text: this kind of explanation was considered more important than the elaboration of original doctrines. To study philosophy meant to study the truth, which Aristotle had already found and expounded in his works; accordingly, to teach philosophy meant to clarify and make accessible such a treasure. The exegetical literature which flourished in this period expressed itself in three literary genres: paraphrase, epitome and commentary – an original creation of Alexandrine philology in the Hellenistic age, used for the study, interpretation and exegesis of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.⁶⁵ The commentary was the literary form which prevailed over the others. The commentators analyzed a treatise chapter-by-chapter, sentence-by-sentence and word-by-word, compared all the variant readings trying to establish the correct one. They analyzed the structure of thought and that of the demonstrations, raised the question of the exact meaning of the technical expressions, and eventually singled out the philosophical meaning of a passage.⁶⁶ The commentator had to keep in mind the whole *corpus* of Aristotle’s writings, in order to clarify this or that difficult passage by connecting it with all that the Philosopher had said on the same topic. In addition, he had to formulate every single piece of exegesis within a consistent framework.⁶⁷

In their selection of Aristotle’s writings to be studied and commented on, the Ancients followed an order with the aim of granting Aristotelian philosophy a structure based on the idea that logic was the foundation of ontology and metaphysics: the *Categories* became the introduction to Aristotle’s writings. Simplicius enumerates four commentators writing on

⁶⁴ On the manuscripts which preserved the text of the *Metaphysics* – A^b – *Laurentianus* 87.12 (twelfth century), E – *Parisinus Graecus* 1853 (tenth century) and J – *Vindobonensis Phil.* 100 (tenth century) – cf. the following studies: Harlfinger (1979), 7–35; Moraux (1967), 17–41; Bernardinello (1970); Bernardinello (1982), 39–54; Hecquet–Devienne (2000), 103–71; Ronconi (2012), 201–225; (2004), 413–441.

⁶⁵ Moraux (1986), 132–133.

⁶⁶ Donini (1994), 5027–5100, maintains that the use of the commentary was promoted solely by the need to re-appropriate a long-forgotten heritage, the scholarly writings of Aristotle. If this were the reason, it would not explain the different generations of commentaries, after the first ones which already showed an accurate level of analysis. So we have to recognize that the Aristotelian commentary was for more than one century the very form of philosophical thinking itself.

⁶⁷ Cf. Donini (1995), 107–129.

this work immediately after Andronicus' edition: the Academic Eudorus, the Stoic Athenodorus and the Peripatetics Boethus and Ariston.⁶⁸ Obviously, the *Metaphysics* was also seen as a work of crucial importance: Aspasius of Athens⁶⁹ (first-second centuries AD) and Aristotle of Mytilène⁷⁰ (second century AD) are mentioned as commentators on the *Metaphysics*.⁷¹ All this is lost to us, but we have Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on the first five books:⁷² his commentary, which still existed in its entirety till the sixth century in Greek – the disciple of Ammonius, Asclepius quotes Alexander's commentary in his commentary on *Metaphysics Zeta* – deeply influenced all the later commentators.⁷³

A second stage in the history of the commentaries on Aristotle's works (270–610 AD), was inaugurated by Porphyry and his reading of Greek philosophy. Porphyry had been educated in Athens by Longinus before he came to Rome, where he spent six years as a disciple of Plotinus. After Plotinus' death, in 270, he edited his writings. Porphyry was deeply convinced that Greek philosophy was derived from the one and transcendent divine wisdom and, for this reason, that Greek philosophy gave rise to a true unity. He was influenced by the pro-Aristotelian Platonism in *vogue* before Plotinus,⁷⁴ and through his exegesis of Plato's dialogues and Aristotle's treatises he tried to heal and reconcile Aristotle's opposition against Plato,⁷⁵ as well as Plotinus' criticisms of Aristotle on metaphysical-ontological issues (for instance, concerning substance and the doctrine of the First Principle).⁷⁶ Porphyry's explanatory strategy has been outlined

⁶⁸ Cf. Gottschalk (1987), 1001–1112; Gottschalk (1990), 55–81.

⁶⁹ Goulet (1989b), 635–636.

⁷⁰ Goulet (1989c), 411–412.

⁷¹ In Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary (cf. next note), three fragments of Aspasius' commentary on *Alpha Meizon*, chapters 5 and 6, and on *Delta 9* are preserved: cf. Moraux (1984), 246–249. Luna (2003), 250, maintains that Aspasius' commentary was probably a paraphrase with a specific interest for textual criticism. In Syrianus' commentary (see below note 80), there is a fragment of the commentary by Aristotle of Mytilène: cf. Moraux (1984), 403–406; Luna (2003), 250; Syrianus came to know this ancient commentary on the *Metaphysics* through the mediation of Alexander of Aphrodisias.

⁷² *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG I, 1–439; Moraux (2001), 423–510; Sharples (1987), 1176–1243.

⁷³ Luna (2003), 254.

⁷⁴ Cf. Dillon (1977); Zambon (2002), 317–338.

⁷⁵ Porphyry wrote a treatise on this central topic, in six books, which has been lost to us, entitled *Περὶ τοῦ μίαν εἶναι τὴν Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους ἀίρεσιν* and a second treatise entitled *Περὶ διαστάσεως Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους*. The fragments are edited in Smith–Wasserstein (1993), 351–407. Cf. Karamanolis (2004), 79–113; Karamanolis (2006), 242–330.

⁷⁶ Cf. Hadot (1974), 31–47; reprint in Hadot (1999), 355–382; English version in Hadot (1990), 125–140; Chiaradonna (1996), 55–94; Chiaradonna (1998), 577–606.

as follows by Ch. Evangeliou: “(a) by avoiding the points on which the two philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, may clash, (b) by stressing the points on which they are apparently in agreement, (c) by drawing the appropriate distinctions, (d) by assigning to each philosopher different operational regions (the sensible world to Aristotle, the intelligible world to Plato) and (e) by insisting on the principle of interpreting Aristotle by Aristotle and Plato by Plato, Porphyry succeeded (if not philosophically, at least diplomatically) in ending a long controversy and in initiating a new tradition which is both Neoplatonic and Neoaristotelian, as the subsequent history of western philosophy clearly indicates”.⁷⁷ Among the Platonists, Porphyry’s Aristotelian commentaries initiated unprecedented activity, which was bound to enjoy a long posterity.

On one hand, the Neoplatonic commentators continued to apply the philological method worked out by the Ancients, of trying to resolve a set of problems related to the transmission of texts. They discussed time and again the interpretations of former commentators, examining – in particular in the introductions to their commentaries – the aim and the utility of every treatise, its position and order in the *corpus* of Aristotle’s writings, and its alleged or real authenticity.⁷⁸ But in the later Neoplatonic commentaries – in particular, those by Syrianus and Proclus in the school of Athens between the fourth and fifth centuries – the inner purpose of the school emerged: in the philosophical schools, the study of Aristotle was considered a preliminary and necessary stage to learn the higher truths of Plato’s ethics, cosmology and metaphysics.

Against this background, one commentary is particularly useful to illustrate the way in which Aristotle was read and analyzed in the Neoplatonic milieu. This is the commentary on some books of the *Metaphysics* by Syrianus, a well-known representative of the Neoplatonic school of Athens of the fifth century. Not only he was the first of the Neoplatonic commentators to challenge the premises and details of Aristotle’s metaphysical doctrine, commenting on the Aristotelian treatise devoted to this topic, but he was also the first to conceive the idea of integrating Aristotle’s account with Plato’s unwritten doctrines in the Neoplatonic perspective of a systematic analysis of the first principles of reality.⁷⁹ Syrianus maintains that in their study of causes, the ancient *φυσικοί* and the Stoics took

⁷⁷ Evangeliou (1988), 167.

⁷⁸ Hadot (1978); Hadot (1987), 99–122; Hadot (1991), 175–189; Hadot (1992), 407–425; Hadot (1997), 169–176.

⁷⁹ Cf. D’Ancona (2000), 189–225; D’Ancona (2000a), 311–326; D’Ancona (2002), 201–251.

into account only material and efficient causes, but ignored the true immaterial causes. On the contrary, Plato and Aristotle clearly saw the transcendent nature of the true cause, with Plato making it the efficient cause, and Aristotle the final. In particular, in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle attributed the first causality to the unique, transcendent First Principle, adding a series of immaterial subordinate substances. This is why, according to Syrianus, the immaterial causes are one and many.⁸⁰ But when Aristotle criticizes the *πάτριος φιλοσοφία*, he goes against philosophical truth and sinks into internal inconsistency.⁸¹

Syrianus commented on books B, Γ, M and N⁸² and placed a prologue before M, as is usual in the Neoplatonic commentaries.⁸³ He claimed to be doing something different from the other commentators, he will keep the same distance from the Platonic and the Aristotelian positions⁸⁴ and set himself up as the arbiter of the attacks Aristotle raised against Plato and Pythagoras.⁸⁵ Cristina D'Ancona surmises that there is some relationship between this declared intention and Syrianus' systematic use of Alexander of Aphrodisias' Commentary, of which he endorsed not only the literary form,⁸⁶ but also the style of exegesis. The idea, even if considered with due caution, is that Syrianus inaugurated a particular exegetical tradition in the school of Athens. This tradition was expressed in the form of a commentary, a product of the cross-pollination of Platonic and Peripatetic exegesis, which had great fortune not only among his direct disciples (Proclus and Hermias) and indirect disciples (Ammonius,

⁸⁰ Syriani *In Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG VI 1, 8. 2–11.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, 10.32–11.5; cf. D'Ancona (2005a), 28–33.

⁸² Luna (2003), 250, maintains that the actual form of Syrianus' commentary is the original one. It was conceived of as a commentary on the most anti-Platonic books of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. On the alleged fragments of Syrianus' commentary on book Z (this is the opinion of Cardullo [1993], 197–214) cf. Luna (2001), 173–174. O'Meara-Dillon (2008), 5 maintain, "it seems unlikely that Syrianus saw any need to produce a commentary on every book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. However, Aristotle criticizes Pythagoreans and Platonists elsewhere in his treatise, not just in book 13–14 (and 1), and it may be that Syrianus' 'antidote' extended somewhat further than we now have".

⁸³ Cf. Saffrey (1990), 173–180.

⁸⁴ Syriani *In Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG VI 1, 80. 4–7.

⁸⁵ Cf. Longo (2005).

⁸⁶ This part of D'Ancona's argument has been rejected by C. Luna and I. Hadot. Luna (2004), 39–79, in particular 73, shows the difference in the division of the lemmas between Alexander's commentary and Syrianus'; and she maintains that Syrianus did not take from Alexander the literary form of his commentary. Hadot (2004), 408–420, in particular 417, derives from a passage in which Simplicius classified the commentaries on the *Categories* known to him the fact that the form of the continuous commentary existed in Neoplatonic circles well before Syrianus. See also Luna (2007), 121–133.

Simplicius and the whole school of Alexandria), but also up until the late Byzantine commentators (Sophonias).⁸⁷

Even if the philosophical needs had changed, the works of the Neoplatonic authors and those of the ancient commentators continued to intertwine, so that we can consider the latter as a development of the former. In the case of the *Metaphysics* this is particularly clear. As is well-known, four commentaries have survived until now: Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on the first five books A-Δ (second-third centuries AD),⁸⁸ Syrianus' commentary on books B, Γ, M and N (d. 437),⁸⁹ Asclepius' commentary on the first seven books A-Z (the notes ἀπὸ φωνῆς of Ammonius' course,⁹⁰ i.e. an edition of his lectures; sixth century AD)⁹¹ and Pseudo-Alexander's commentary on books E-N (twelfth century AD).⁹² In addition to these commentaries we have: (i) the Syriac epitome and the Arabic translation of Nicolaus of Damascus' Περὶ τῆς Ἀριστοτέλους φιλοσοφίας (lost in Greek; first century BC-beginning of our era).⁹³ This work was used by Averroes in his *Great Commentary on Metaphysics*.⁹⁴ Nicolaus' work was a paraphrase of Aristotle's philosophy and it included the *Metaphysics*.⁹⁵ (ii) Two fragments from Porphyry's commentary on Λ (third century) quoted in Simplicius' commentary on the *De Caelo*.⁹⁶ (iii) Themistius' paraphrase of book Λ (317–388). As is well-known, it is lost in Greek and it seems to have left no traces in its place of origin, the Byzantine world. But it partially survived in an Arabic version whose

⁸⁷ D'Ancona (2000a), 311–326; D'Ancona (2002), 210–211.

⁸⁸ Cf. above note 71.

⁸⁹ Cf. above 22–23.

⁹⁰ Asclepii *In Aristotelis Metaphysicorum Libros A-Z Commentaria*, CAG VI 2, 1. 2–3; 113. 1–2; 137. 2–3; 222. 2–3.

⁹¹ Asclepii *In Aristotelis Metaphysicorum Libros A-Z Commentaria*, CAG VI 2. On the transmission of ancient treatises through the notes of a disciple attending the course of his teacher cf. Richard (1950), 191–222. On the interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the circle of Ammonius cf. Kraemer (1961); Verrycken (1990), 199–231.

⁹² Alexandri Aphrodisiensis *In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG I, 440–837. The attribution of books E-N published under the name of Alexander of Aphrodisias to Michael of Ephesus was maintained by Praechter (1906), 861–907, and confirmed by Luna (2001), 53–71, 197–212. See below p. 17.

⁹³ Fazzo (2008), 99–126 raises doubts on the identity of Nicolaus and on the date of composition and the origin of this treatise. In her opinion we may postpone Nicolaus the author of Περὶ τῆς Ἀριστοτέλους φιλοσοφίας to the fourth century or at least to a period between the third and the fifth centuries; her arguments appear convincing.

⁹⁴ Cf. below 43–44.

⁹⁵ Cf. Drossaart Lulofs (1969); Moraux (1973), 465–487; 473–475.

⁹⁶ Cf. Luna (2003), 251–252; Brisson (1999), 37–60; Blumenthal (1974), 540–556, and in particular 541, doubts that Porphyry wrote a commentary on Λ, but his arguments are not conclusive.

authorship was a debated question until recently (Abū Bišr Mattā or Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn).⁹⁷ In 1255, the Arabic version was translated into Hebrew by Moses ben Samuel ibn Tibbon, and in 1558 the Hebrew version was translated again into Latin by Moses Finzi. These are the versions in which Themistius' work has come down to us.⁹⁸ (iv) Two self-references to a commentary on the *Metaphysics* which is found on the commentary on the *De Anima* published in CAG 11 under the name of Simplicius (sixth century AD).⁹⁹

In a significant work, C. Luna has shed light on the interrelationships of the ancient commentaries on the *Metaphysics*¹⁰⁰ and their reciprocal influence. There are three problems discussed. First, there is the influence of Alexander's commentary on Syrianus.¹⁰¹ Syrianus thought he had found in Alexander the literal and definitive exegesis of Aristotle's text, to which he wanted to add his own speculative exegesis, in order to refute the anti-Platonic arguments of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Only in two cases do we find in Syrianus' commentary a doctrinal and polemical use of Alexander's commentary: the problem of the existence of universals and the doctrine of the specific differentia. The analysis of the relationship between these two commentaries shows the continuity and, at the same time, the innovation of the Neoplatonic commentaries in the development of the ancient exegesis of Aristotle. In the introduction to their English translation of Syrianus' commentary on books B and F, O'Meara and Dillon, following Luna, give this explanation on to the close relationship between the two commentaries by Alexander and Syrianus: "Syrianus' *Commentary on the Metaphysics* is not a commentary on the *Metaphysics* in the sense of a continuous explanation of the text, such as that provided by Alexander of Aphrodisias. Syrianus' work is rather a corrective, or 'antidote' (or perhaps a kit of antidotes!), to be used by the student who reads Aristotle's work; for actual explanations of passages in the text, the student can use Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary. The student will also find in Syrianus' commentary on book 4, not a commentary (such as Alexander's), but an overview of metaphysics. The metaphysical

⁹⁷ Cf. note 215.

⁹⁸ Themistii *In Aristotelis Metaphysicorum librum L paraphrasis hebraice et latine*, CAG V.5. Cf. Brague (1999). On Themistius, his age and works, see Dagron (1968), 1–242.

⁹⁹ For the history of the attribution of this commentary and the bibliography on this question see D'Ancona (2002), 220 note 60. For the remark that book *M* was taken into account by Iamblicus, as it is witnessed in this pseudo-Simplicius commentary cf. Luna (2003), 255–256; D'Ancona (2002), 208 note 20.

¹⁰⁰ Luna (2001); see also the polemical reaction of Tarán (2005), 196–209.

¹⁰¹ Luna (2001), 72–98.

deficiencies that Syrianus notes in Aristotle's treatise are expressed in the distinction he sometimes makes between the 'demonic' Aristotle and the 'divine' Platonists and Pythagoreans. This distinction indicates a subordinate rank in philosophical insight, as demons are subordinate to gods. From these observations we can conclude that no new complete commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is required in the philosophical curriculum. Alexander of Aphrodisias' *Commentary* will suffice for explaining the text. However, Aristotle's treatise and Alexander's commentary should be accompanied by refutation when they attack Pythagorean-Platonic metaphysics or take positions against it, a refutation supplied by Syrianus".¹⁰²

Secondly, Luna discusses the relationship between Syrianus' commentary, and Pseudo-Alexander's and the question of Pseudo-Alexander's identity.¹⁰³

Finally, Luna examines Asclepius' commentary, which consists of notes from Ammonius' course. Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary is reflected in it in the form of excerpts (copied verbatim by Asclepius in books A, α, B and Γ),¹⁰⁴ non-literal quotations (probably parts of Ammonius' course) and quotations percolated throughout Syrianus' commentary.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² O'Meara-Dillon (2008), 4–5.

¹⁰³ Luna (2001), 1–71. The problem of the relation between the two commentaries arises from the fact that in books M and N there are passages which are common to the two authors. In theory, there are three possible explanations: either Pseudo-Alexander depends on Syrianus, or Syrianus depends on pseudo-Alexander, or both depend on a common source. This last hypothesis has never been maintained, because a common source is not sufficient to justify the identity of the passages mentioned above. The supporters of Syrianus' dependence on Pseudo-Alexander have not put forward any candidate (cf. the preface by Bonitz to *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG I, xviii–xix; Usener [1870] reprint in *Aristotelis Opera* t. IV Gigon); the preface by Kroll to *Syriani In Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG VI 1, vi); the supporters of the opposite thesis have suggested Michael of Ephesus (twelfth century): cf. Rose (1854), 147–152; Freudenthal (1885); Praechter (1906), 861–907; Moraux (1942), 14–19; Saffrey (1955), 18–19. This topic was a particularly debated question: Tarán (1987), 215–232 has maintained that Pseudo-Alexander is Syrianus' source, that neither Syrianus nor Pseudo-Alexander knew Alexander's commentary on books M and N, and that Pseudo-Alexander was a forger who wanted to compose a commentary under the name of Alexander of Aphrodisias. Luna discusses these conclusions which do not seem to survive her minute analysis of the texts. In Luna's opinion Michael of Ephesus did not know books A–Δ of Alexander's commentary, while Syrianus had at his disposal Alexander's commentary in its entirety. All the parallel passages in Syrianus and in Pseudo-Alexander are explicable as Pseudo-Alexander's borrowings from Syrianus. Michael of Ephesus was not a forger, even if he refers to Alexander's authentic books in the first person.

¹⁰⁴ Even though Luna (2001), 188, observes that among the explicit quotations the one on page 265.18–25 seems to refer to Syrianus.

¹⁰⁵ Luna (2001), 99–186.

Syrianus' commentary exerted a deep influence both on Asclepius' commentary and on Ammonius', the direct source of Asclepius, both in form and contents. This fact is evident in four different respects: (i) for Asclepius, as for Syrianus, to comment on the *Metaphysics* meant essentially to replay the anti-Platonic arguments put forward by Aristotle. (ii) Consequently, Asclepius' commentary on A and B has the same structure as Syrianus', that is to say, it is a paraphrastic exposition of Aristotle's text followed by an answer to the difficulties raised by Aristotle. (iii) Because Asclepius conceives of the commentary as a polemic dialogue against Aristotle, he seems to inherit from Syrianus the habit of referring to Aristotle in the second person singular. (iv) In books B and Γ, Asclepius quite often uses Syrianus' commentary. We can find evident literal traces even in anonymous quotations. For this reason, it is possible to think that Ammonius had at his disposal the written version of Syrianus' commentary, even though we cannot exclude the existence of a tradition of oral teaching following the chain of Syrianus, Proclus (or Hermias), Ammonius and Asclepius.

Compared to Syrianus' commentary, Asclepius' is less polemical with respect to Aristotle and tries to establish a harmony between Plato and Aristotle, who was considered as a member of Plato's school. In this harmonious commentary, Aristotle's true target is not Plato, but the false interpretations of Platonism.¹⁰⁶

The tradition of the ancient commentaries on the *Metaphysics* shows no break; however, as for the ancient Greek commentators who faced the problems of the unity and the subjects of the *Metaphysics*, there is much less homogeneity.

As is well-known, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* discusses four different subjects: (i) it is an inquiry into the first causes and highest principles of all beings – aetiology; (ii) an ontology, which concerns being *qua* being; (iii) a ousiology, because substance is the primary meaning of being; (iv) a theology, because it considers the divine. According to G. Verbeke, the ancient Greek commentators, aware as they were of the complex nature of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, tried to clarify it by focusing on four different problems: (i) the relationship between physics and metaphysics, (ii) the relationship between metaphysics and theology, (iii) the exact

¹⁰⁶ See Ammonius' interpretation of the Forms as λόγοι δημιουργικοί in the mind of God, a thesis which, in Ammonius' opinion, is common to Plato and Aristotle in D'Ancona (2005a), 33–34. On the different interpretations of Ammonius' metaphysics cf. Verrycken (1990), 199–231.

meaning of the formula being *qua* being, and, finally, (iv) the doctrinal unity of this Aristotelian treatise.¹⁰⁷ As for (i), for the ancient commentators, physics and metaphysics do not coincide: physics does not deal with being *qua* being, so it is not ontology. In particular, Alexander still keeps physics and metaphysics carefully apart. In his commentary, he states that some philosophers were persuaded that nothing exists except for physical reality, but they erred. There are some beings beyond the physical realm.¹⁰⁸ Physics is an important part of philosophy, but is not the First Philosophy itself, and it does not study being *qua* being.¹⁰⁹ This inquiry belongs to the field of philosophy, which deals with first substances, substance in general, and whatever belongs to substance.¹¹⁰ In Alexander's opinion, First Philosophy is first for two reasons: it deals with first substances and with everything whose being depends upon them; moreover, in so far as it deals with being *qua* being, it considers mainly that nature to which all other beings refer and to which they owe their being.¹¹¹ Themistius also clearly distinguishes between the sensible substance, which is studied by physics, and immutable substance, which belongs to a higher discipline.¹¹² As to Syrianus, the question is not whether or not there are other substances beyond sensible things, but whether or not the name 'substance' may also be applied to the sensible world in addition to the true, intelligible substance.¹¹³ Asclepius emphasizes that physics ought to be studied before metaphysics. Metaphysics deals in its end with what is perfect.¹¹⁴ It is the principle of everything,¹¹⁵ the First Cause of reality,¹¹⁶ the Divine,¹¹⁷ the Good, the final cause of the universe,¹¹⁸ the One from which everything originates.¹¹⁹

Concerning the relationship between metaphysics and theology (ii), there appears to be a progressive shift of perspective towards Neoplatonic positions. In his commentary, Alexander maintains that First Philosophy

¹⁰⁷ Verbeke (1981), 107–127.

¹⁰⁸ Alexandri Aphrodisiensis *In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG I, 265.37–38.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, 266. 2–18.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 266. 6–8.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, 266. 8–14.

¹¹² Brague (1999), 53 (passage 18).

¹¹³ Syriani *In Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG VI. 1, 3. 37–39.

¹¹⁴ Asclepii *In Aristotelis Metaphysicorum Libros A-Z Commentaria*, CAG VI. 2, 3. 25.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, for example 17. 7; 19. 34–35; 48. 5–6; 60. 23–24; 99. 5.

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*, for example 56. 24; 23. 3; 35. 10–11; 35. 15; 39. 17; 52. 7; 115. 37.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 439. 26–27.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 15.8.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 33. 34–5; 54. 25–6; 249. 3.

deals with the immutable and separate substance, which is prior to physical things. Accordingly, this discipline is more perfect and dignified than the other branches of learning and the study of being *qua* being belongs to it.¹²⁰ In this perspective, First Philosophy is universal in the sense that it is prior to all other sciences and counts as a condition for their possibility. Alexander also emphasizes that metaphysics deals with the highest level of truth and being,¹²¹ which is itself the cause of being and truth of any lower level.¹²² Distorting Aristotle's teaching, he claims that it is the source from which the being of everything proceeds. As for Themistius, he stresses the fact that God knows everything because he is the principle of whatever exists. God knows the world because he is its cause.¹²³

In his commentary, Syrianus does not use the expression 'metaphysics', but refers to 'wisdom' or 'theology' or 'First Philosophy'. He calls Aristotle's *Metaphysics* a theological treatise: the 'wisdom' proposed by Aristotle at the beginning of book A, the science of 'being as being' of book Γ, the 'First Philosophy, and the theological science' of book E coincide in one and the same science, which is the same as described by Plato in the *Republic*: the knowledge of Forms and of the Form of Good.¹²⁴ For Syrianus, too, the first substance described in this science is the cause of all other beings.¹²⁵ Asclepius maintains that the first substance, which is the highest and uncompounded being, produces all other beings through its creative power,¹²⁶ without any change or temporal process. This does not mean that everything receives being to an equal degree: all things receive it according to their capacity. For Asclepius, metaphysics has the immutable and divine substance as its proper object. We are unable to contemplate the supersensible world directly: we have to start from knowledge of physical reality, less intelligible in itself, but closer to us.¹²⁷

As to the exact meaning of the formula being *qua* being (iii), in Alexander's opinion it is not the task of the physicist to investigate being *qua* being, but the philosopher's. Philosophy considers being *qua* being

¹²⁰ Freudenthal (1885), frgm. 2, 69–70.

¹²¹ Alexandri Aphrodisiensis *In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG I, 139. 3; 147. 7; 148. 18; Freudenthal (1885), frgm. 4, 72.

¹²² Alexandri Aphrodisiensis *In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG I, 147.7; 147.27; 148.30.

¹²³ Brague (1999), 94 (passage 29).

¹²⁴ Syrianus *In Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG VI. 1, 55.29–33.

¹²⁵ *Ibidem*, II. 13–16.

¹²⁶ For the collection of all the passages in which Asclepius describes the productivity of the One cf. Verrycken (1990), 205 note 34.

¹²⁷ Asclepii *In Aristotelis Metaphysicorum Libros A-Z Commentaria*, CAG VI. 2, 1. 7–17.

and what represents the highest degree of being: substance. This highest level of perfection is not a physical substance.¹²⁸ According to Syrianus, metaphysics studies all beings, but mainly the highest beings and substance, because from the first being all other things receive their being and perfection.¹²⁹ There are different levels of philosophical inquiry: First Philosophy, which considers intelligible substance, philosophical discipline dealing with heavenly bodies, and the study of the world as it comes to be and passes away. Syrianus surely shares in Aristotle's opinion that being in its most significant instance, namely substance, is the core of whatever exists, but for him there is also a principle beyond being and beyond the human possibility of knowledge: the supreme unity.¹³⁰ According to Asclepius, the formula being *qua* being mainly designates the first being, the source of all other beings,¹³¹ totally uncompounded, the supreme unity and provident God.¹³² The One is sometimes called being in the proper sense (*κυρίως ὄν*),¹³³ and also, being only,¹³⁴ being really,¹³⁵ and the very first substance.¹³⁶ These statements are difficult to understand if one takes into account that at the same time, for Asclepius, the transcendence of the One rules out the possibility of describing it affirmatively: it is, in fact, beyond every concept.¹³⁷ Verrycken solves this contradiction by saying that these identifications between One and being "are just intended to interpret Aristotle's definition of metaphysics as the theory of being *qua* being and to give it a theological sense, i.e. to understand being *qua* being as the God or the One, and the being of the remaining beings as the participation in the goodness of the One. On the other hand, the One does not seem to lose its supra-intelligible quality in this context[...]The One and Being are different hypostases". The first can be predicated of the second, but not vice versa.¹³⁸

One of the most difficult problems the commentators had to face is that of the doctrinal unity of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. If the *Metaphysics* is a collection of different branches of learning, its unity seems to be very loose.

¹²⁸ Freudenthal (1885), frgm. 3, pp. 70–71.

¹²⁹ Syriani *In Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG VI. 1, 57. 22–24; 171. 26–27.

¹³⁰ *Ibidem*, II. 19–25.

¹³¹ *Ibidem*, 225. 34.

¹³² *Ibidem*, 227. 10.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, 223. 35–36; 225. 15–17; 225. 22; 225. 34–226. 3; 226. 6–8; 230. 4.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, 226. 6; 226. 16–17; 227. 2; 227.12.

¹³⁵ *Ibidem*, 238. 5.

¹³⁶ *Ibidem*, 232. 9–10.

¹³⁷ *Ibidem*, 158. 18–23.

¹³⁸ Verrycken (1990), 207–208.

Alexander was quite conscious of this difficulty.¹³⁹ From the very beginning of his commentary on book *Alpha Meizon*, we may assume that he considers the *Metaphysics* as a unitary work: the science described in it by Aristotle has one object. Nevertheless, Aristotle uses different names for this science: he calls it *sophia*, philosophy, First Philosophy, science of being *qua* being, or theology. All these expressions do not imply that one and the same science has as its object being *qua* being, that is, the intelligible and divine substances upon which all the other substances depend.¹⁴⁰ In Alexander's view, the fact that the object of the *Metaphysics* is being *qua* being and, at one and the same time, the immaterial and divine substance, should not be understood as a mere identification between being *qua* being and the first substance. For him, as for Aristotle, being is neither univocal (as a matter of fact, it is applied to the ten categories among which the first is substance and the other nine are accidents), nor equivocal (as a mere name indicating different things). All the various meanings depend on a basic one and refer to it ($\acute{\alpha}\varphi' \acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{o}\varsigma \tau\epsilon \kappa\alpha\iota \pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\nu$). That primary meaning is substance and properly the highest substance, which is the source of being for everything.¹⁴¹ In Alexander's view, there is nothing beyond being. Not only do all beings refer to the primary being ($\chi\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma \acute{\delta}\nu$), but also everything is said to be because it depends on the highest substance, which is immaterial and immutable.¹⁴² In this way, the unity of metaphysics is granted: it is the science of the principles of being.¹⁴³ Alexander's solution is similar to those which were to be adopted by Syrianus and Asclepius, as we have seen in the discussion of the previous points.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Scholars have offered different solutions to this problem. For Merlan (1957), 87–92 being *qua* being in Alexander must be directly identified with the divine substance: metaphysics coincides perfectly with theology. This interpretation has been rejected by Genequand (1979), 48–57. Genequand attributes Alexander with the first attempt to distinguish between *metaphysica generalis* (the general science of being *qua* being) and *metaphysica specialis* (the science of the divine substance, i.e. theology), the typical division of late scholastic philosophy. A third, attractive solution has been recently suggested by Donini (2003), 15–51, who stresses Alexander's strictly unitary interpretation of the object of metaphysics and the possible combination of this exegesis with the passages of book *Gamma* (2, 1003b 21–22; 2, 1004a 2–9) from which the division provided by Genequand seems to derive. See also Bonelli (2001) e (2001a), 61–83, on the idea of a *Metaphysics* as a demonstrative science on the model of *Posterior Analytics*, as presented in Alexander's commentary of book Γ .

¹⁴⁰ Alexandri Aphrodisiensis *In Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG VI. 2, 171. 5–11; 237. 3–5.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 244. 17–20; 266. 2–14.

¹⁴² *Ibidem*, 240. 17–20.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*, 9. 8–12.

¹⁴⁴ Syriani *In Metaphysica Commentaria*, CAG VI. 1, 54. 20–55. 1; 56. 13–16; 57. 13–15; Asclepii *In Aristotelis Metaphysicorum Libros A-Z Commentaria*, CAG VI. 2, 226. 15–19; 229. 3–4; 231. 10–232. 1.

2. *On the Arabic Tradition of Aristotle's Metaphysics (8th–9th Centuries)*

It is well-known that the genesis of Arabic philosophy is connected with the last period of activity of the philosophical schools in Late Antiquity. The famous passage from al-Fārābī's lost writing *Fī Zuhūr al-falsafa* (*On the Appearance of Philosophy*),¹⁴⁵ reported by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a in his *Uyūn al-anbā' fī tabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*,¹⁴⁶ has been interpreted as a reliable testimony of the nearly continuous link which connected the last philosophical schools of Alexandria to the beginning of Arabic philosophy in Baghdad through Ḥarrān,¹⁴⁷ where, according to Tardieu,¹⁴⁸ Simplicius had written his commentaries on Aristotle's writings. Even if this reconstruction has been criticized¹⁴⁹ and the apologetical aim of al-Fārābī's passage has been clarified,¹⁵⁰ Vallat's recent study *Farabi et l'école d'Alexandrie* reconsiders al-Fārābī's doctrinal dependence on the Alexandrine tradition: not only does al-Fārābī's philosophy trace back to the Alexandrine philosophers, but he "les prolonge tout en se rattachant directement à leur source d'autorité commune, à savoir Platon".¹⁵¹

In the following paragraphs, it will be possible to observe to what extent the Arabic tradition of the Greek philosophical works and, in particular, of the *Metaphysics* – through ways of transmission not entirely clear – was to draw on the late ancient Neoplatonic exegetical tradition. This fact was one of the main reasons for the complexity of the philosophy developed in the Arabic language, both in its form and contents.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ It is not clear whether the title *On the Appearance of Philosophy* reported by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a's passage was also the title given by al-Fārābī to his work: cf. Stroumsa (1991), 264–265.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II. 134.30–135.24 Müller. Cf. the English translations of the passage in Rosenthal (1975), 50–51 and in Gutas (1999), 155–193.

¹⁴⁷ Meyerhof (1930), 389–429.

¹⁴⁸ Tardieu (1986), 1–44; Tardieu (1987), 40–57; Tardieu (1990).

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Luna (2001a), 482–504, where she reviews Thiel (1999); Lameer (1997), 181–191.

¹⁵⁰ Strohmaier (1987), 380–389; Gutas (1999), 153–193.

¹⁵¹ Vallat (2004), 15–23, 367–372, quotation at page 367.

¹⁵² There is a textual link between the exegetical works composed in Alexandria and more in general between the Neoplatonic approach to the study of the philosophy and the Arabic-Islamic exegesis of Aristotle's writings. Gutas (1983), 231–267, recognizes it in the classification of the parts of Aristotle's philosophy proposed by Paul the Persian, who was active in the middle of the sixth century at the court of Chosroes and whose works transmitted the model of the Alexandrian *Prolegomena* to al-Fārābī and Miskawayh. Cf. also Teixidor (2003). We find another observation of this kind in Watt (1993), 579–601; Watt (1994), 245–258; Watt (1995), 17–41. Watt shows that, concerning the use and the space accorded to the *Rhetoric*, Paul the Persian, Anthony of Tagrit, an author of ninth century, Themistius and al-Fārābī all share the same scholastic tradition.

2.1. *The Translation and the Reception of Metaphysics in Arabic*

In the year 642 AD, Alexandria, well-known as a place for the study of Greek philosophy and theology, passed under Islamic rule. Greek culture had flourished in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Iran since the time of Alexander the Great, and, from the fourth-fifth centuries, other active centres of Greek culture were Antioch, Edessa, Nisibis, Qinnasrīn, and Rēš'aynā. In those places, there were a number of Christian churches which played a crucial role in the transmission of Greek science and philosophy.¹⁵³ Against the background of the theological struggles of the fifth century, the Christians translated Greek logical works into Syriac,¹⁵⁴ works which were considered necessary for the comprehension of the theological concepts and the dialectical strategy of argumentation with the regards to the heated Christological debate at that time. During this first "logical" period, the entire *Organon*, with the exception of the *Poetics*, was translated and commented on. Then, in the gradual process by which Greek thought was acquired in Syriac, a second encyclopaedical period followed, which was devoted to the translation of the secular, scientific and philosophical works.¹⁵⁵ We have some evidence that the *Metaphysics*, or at least book Δ, was also translated into Syriac in the sixth century.¹⁵⁶

So the first Semitic language into which the Greek philosophical works were translated was Syriac. Originally an Aramaic dialect, Syriac soon became the privileged intermediary for knowledge of Greek philosophy in the Muslim world.¹⁵⁷

Besides the centres of Syriac Christianity, another two channels of transmission of the Greek works seem to have been Ḥarrān¹⁵⁸ and

¹⁵³ See the up-to-date study of this context and the related bibliography in Bettio (2005), I. 48–100. On Edessa, modern Urfa in south-east Turkey, cf. Segal (1970); Ross (2001); Possekel (1999), 13–32. Drijvers (1995), 49–59. On Nisibis cf. Vööbus (1965); Reinink (1995). On the founder of the monastery of Qinnasrīn see: Watt (1999), 154–169.

¹⁵⁴ Georr (1948); Brock (1982), 17–39; Brock (1989), 1–17; Brock (1993), 3–18. Hugonnard-Roche (1989), 502–528; Hugonnard-Roche (1990), 131–147; Hugonnard-Roche (1991), 187–209; Hugonnard-Roche (1994), 293–312; Hugonnard-Roche (1997), 339–363; Hugonnard-Roche (1997a), 79–97; Hugonnard-Roche (1997b), 121–143; Hugonnard-Roche (2000), pp. 59–82; Hugonnard-Roche (2001), 16–25; Hugonnard-Roche (2003), 208–218; Hugonnard-Roche (2004), 57–83; Hugonnard-Roche (2004a). Aouad–Watt (2003), 219.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Brock (1977), 406–422; reprint in Brock (1997), 1–17; Brock (2003), 9–28; Brock (2007), 293–306; Drossaert Lulofs (1969); Perczel (2000), 79–94; Degen (1981), 131–166; Possekel (1998), 7–36. Bettio (2003), 83–103; Hugonnard-Roche (2007), 279–291.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Furlani (1921), 268–273; Furlani (1925), 262–282; Furlani (1928), 222–249; Hugonnard-Roche (2004a), 52–53.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Fiey (1980); Hugonnard-Roche (1991b), 193–210.

¹⁵⁸ Green (1998).

Ġundisābūr,¹⁵⁹ in the south of the Persian empire, where the emperor Chosroes I Anūšīrwān (d. 579)¹⁶⁰ founded a school, equipped with an academy and a observatory, which produced the physicians of the first ‘Abbāsīd caliphs.

In Baghdad, during the first centuries of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate, approximately between 750 and 1000 AD, many translations of philosophical texts from Greek to Arabic were made.¹⁶¹ The need to translate Greek philosophical texts was the result both of the Muslim conquest of the regions of the Eastern Roman Empire, whose intellectual life was well developed, and, also as result of the political and religious situation of the Muslim world between the eighth and ninth centuries. The ‘Abbāsīd caliphate endorsed Mu‘tazilite theology,¹⁶² namely, the first attempt to check Islamic dogma against human rationality: al-Ma‘mūn raised it to a State doctrine in 827.¹⁶³ In that period, there was a sort of “intellectual rapture” among Muslim thinkers: once they had discovered the power of rational reasoning, they dared to develop rational reflections on religious problems, scandalizing the orthodox and conservative Muslims, who followed the *Qur‘ān* and the Sunna literally and were extremely suspicious of all innovation (*bid‘a*).¹⁶⁴ The followers of Greek philosophy (*falsafa*), the *falāsifa*, considered Greek philosophy both as the repository of universal truth, a sort of secularized Scripture, and also as an ideology and methodology which justified the activity of the Arabic-Islamic scientific

¹⁵⁹ Schöffler (1979).

¹⁶⁰ For the historian Agathias (*Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum Libri Quinque*, 80.7–24, 81.8–21 Keydell), after the closing of the school of Athens ordered by the emperor Justinian in 529 AD, the Neoplatonic philosophers Simplicius and Damascius – cf. Hoffmann (1989), 556–559 – were received together with five other Neoplatonic philosophers of their age (τῶν ἐν τῷ καθ’ ἡμᾶς χρόνῳ φιλοσοφησάντων) at the Persian court. They were active there until 532, when thanks to a peace treaty between the Sasanians and the Byzantines, they left the Persian empire.

¹⁶¹ The reference studies on the materials which were translated in this period are Endress (1987), 400–530; Endress (1992), 24–152; on the Greek-Arabic translation movement see Gutas (1998); see also Bernards-Nawas (2005); Martini Bonadeo (2005); Di Branco (2011) who discusses and corrects Gutas (1998).

¹⁶² On the *Mu‘tazila* and its founder Wāṣil ibn ‘Atā’ (d. 748 or 749) cf. Nader (1956); Gimaret (1986); Cruz Hernández (1996); Martin–Woodward–Atmaja (1997). On the different tendencies among the Mu‘tazilite teachers cf. Van Ess (1984). The reference work on the testimonies and materials is Van Ess (1991–1997). On the five doctrinal bases of the Mu‘tazilite theology: 1. the *tawhīd* and the related negative theology, 2. the creation of the *Qur‘ān*, 3. the *‘adl*, 4. the doctrine of *al-wa‘d wa-l-wa‘d*, and 5. the rule of *al-amr bi-l-ma‘rūf wa-l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*: cf. Anawati (1996).

¹⁶³ On the reasons for this religious policy of al-Ma‘mūn cf. Gutas (1998), 111–122.

¹⁶⁴ Anawati (1996).

community in the applied sciences.¹⁶⁵ These were the reasons which made them eager to possess as many Greek texts as possible in an unprecedented effort.

The Arabic translators were mostly Melkite Christians, like al-Bīrīq ('the Patrikios'), or Nestorians, like the family of Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, or even Jacobites, like Ibn Nā'ima al-Ḥimṣī. Most of them were Syriac-speakers. Some of them knew Greek, as attested for the translators who were active in "the circle of al-Kindī"¹⁶⁶ and in that of Ḥunayn;¹⁶⁷ others, like the translators who were active in tenth-century Baghdad, did not know Greek and translated from Syriac translations of Greek texts. Despite these differences, the common feature of these translators was their attempt to grasp the structural difference between Greek and Arabic.¹⁶⁸

According to D. Gutas, in his study of the historical and social reasons for the Arabic transmission of Greek philosophy, the Greek-Arabic translation movement can be evaluated from two related points of view: one socio-historical¹⁶⁹ and one technical (the philological nature of translations and the translation techniques). Concerning the second problem, Gutas criticizes the instrumental use which scholars from Walzer onwards (Peters) have made of the testimony of Ḥalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, a polymath of the fourteenth century, who distinguished two different techniques of translation from Greek to Arabic: the first and the more ancient, *ad verbum*, and the second, *ad sensum*. Walzer and Peters derived from this testimony the impression of a stylistic and chronological tripartite division in their evaluation of the different translation techniques: the

¹⁶⁵ Endress (1997), 1–42.

¹⁶⁶ The importance of this circle has been emphasized by G. Endress, who observes that some intellectuals, active between 750 and 850, shared in the style of translation, the geographical region, Baghdad, and the link with al-Kindī's philosophy: Endress (1973); Endress (1997a), 43–76.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Salama Carr (1990). Endress (1997a), 48–49, is cautious about the existence of a proper Ḥunayn school of translation.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Martini Bonadeo (2012), 303–319.

¹⁶⁹ According to Gutas (1998), 2, to study the translation movement from the socio-historical perspective means examining the typology of the texts selected for translation, investigating the social and research needs which those texts covered and the following implications for social history. The Greek-Arabic translation movement represented such an astounding enterprise that it must be explained as a social phenomenon independently of its significance for Greek and Arabic philology and the history of philosophy and science. It lasted well over two centuries, and was supported by the entire elite of 'Abbāsīd society. It was subsidized by an enormous outlay of funds, both public and private. It was not the eccentric whim of some rich patrons who sought to invest in a philanthropic or self-aggrandizing cause, but it was generated by needs and tendencies in nascent 'Abbāsīd society.

ancient literal translations used by the philosopher al-Kindī, the more polished intermediate phase of Ḥunayn and his circle, and the later elaboration of the tenth-century school of Baghdad, mostly revisions of the earlier ones.¹⁷⁰ Gutas considers more fruitful to speak of complexes of translations, that is to say, groups of works, characterized by specific stylistic and doctrinal aspects, concerning which it is incorrect to say that they became more refined and sophisticated.¹⁷¹

Among the complexes outlined by Gutas, that which is of particular interest to us has been singled out by G. Endress:¹⁷² the translations produced by al-Kindī and his circle. To this complex belong Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Uṣṭāt's version, a translator otherwise not well-known; a paraphrastic selection from Plotinus' *Enneads* (IV to VI), known as the *Theology of Aristotle*, which was translated by 'Abd al-Masīḥ ibn Nā'ima al-Ḥimṣī¹⁷³ and, as we read in the prologue, corrected by al-Kindī himself,¹⁷⁴ and a selection of propositions from the *Elements of Theology* by Proclus,¹⁷⁵ some of which were reworked in a compilation known as *The Book on the Pure Good* (*Kitāb fī maḥḍ al-ḥayr*), which may have been revised by al-Kindī himself¹⁷⁶ (this compilation, translated in Latin, circulated in the medieval age as the *Liber de Causis*).¹⁷⁷ To this complex belong

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Walzer (1963); Walzer (1970), 7–42, 207–242; Peters (1968).

¹⁷¹ Gutas (1998), 142–143.

¹⁷² Endress (1997), 43–76.

¹⁷³ For a complete presentation of the history of studies on the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* see the introduction in Bettiolo *et alii* (2003), 72–111. See also Aouad (1989), 541–590, and Zimmermann (1986), 110–240. I quote here only the reference studies. The Arabic version of the *Enneads* (IV–VI) is based on Porphyry's edition of Plotinus' treatises [cf. Schwyzer (1941), 216–236]. The Arabic paraphrase of the *Enneads* (IV–VI) survived in three Arabic texts which are homogeneous in terminology, style and doctrine – probably due to a common source. The first, the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*, was edited by Dieterici (1882) and again by Badawī (1955). Other fragments of this paraphrase were discovered by Kraus (1940–41), 263–295 and by Rosenthal (1952), 461–492; Rosenthal (1953), 370–400; Rosenthal (1955), 42–65; reprint in Rosenthal (1990). The English translation by G. Lewis is reproduced next to the Greek text in the *editio maior* of Plotinus' *Enneads* (*Plotini Opera*, ed. P. Henry et H.R. Schwyzer 1959). See Chapter 3, pp. 254–261.

¹⁷⁴ Badawī (1955), 3.4–9. For Zimmermann (1986), 122 the author of the Prologue is the translator himself, but D'Ancona (1998), 841–855, recognizes al-Kindī himself as the author of the Prologue. Cf. D'Ancona (2001a), 78–112; Adamson (2002a), 35–40 shares the same thesis.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Endress (1973); Jolivet (1979), 55–75; Zimmermann (1994), 9–51. Several of Proclus' propositions are transmitted separately, attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias. As for similarities in style and terminology they go back to al-Kindī's circle: cf. Pines (1955), 195–203; reprint Pines (1986), 278–286; Lewin (1955), 101–108. Van Ess (1966), 48–68; Pines (1986), 287–293.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. D'Ancona (1995), 155–194.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. D'Ancona–Taylor (2003), 599–647.

also the *Introduction to Arithmetic* by the Neopythagorean Nicomachus, translated by Ibn Bihri, Metropolitan of Mosul, and corrected by al-Kindi; the paraphrases of some Platonic dialogues: that of the *Timaeus*¹⁷⁸ (lost for us) translated by Yaḥyā ibn al-Biṭriq, son of a Byzantine *patrikios*, and that of the *Symposium*, probably done by a Ṣābiʿan scholar. Finally, there are Aristotle's *De Caelo*,¹⁷⁹ the *Meteorology*,¹⁸⁰ and the zoological works¹⁸¹ translated by Yaḥyā; and a compendium of Aristotle's *De Anima*, influenced by the commentary of John Philoponus and also, more significantly, by a late sixth-century paraphrase of which Philoponus' commentary was the source (this text was still read by Sophonias in thirteenth-fourteenth centuries Byzantium);¹⁸² some *quaestiones* by Alexander of Aphrodisias and some revisions of his writings;¹⁸³ and, finally, some doxographical works.¹⁸⁴ All these texts, which we will have occasion to revisit again, show linguistic, terminological, stylistic and doctrinal features, or *guide-fossils*, which identify this complex.¹⁸⁵

As we have just seen, the most ancient Arabic translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, made by Uṣṭāṭ for al-Kindi and his circle,¹⁸⁶ belongs to this early and important group of translations.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. the impressive study by Arnzen (2011), 181–267, where the transmission of Plato's œuvre, not excluding Plato's *Timaeus*, is described as “among the most complicated, puzzling and enigmatic cases of the entire Greco-Arabic transmission of scientific and philosophical texts” (182). Arnzen suggests that we may be quite certain that the tripartite translation of *Timaeus* attributed to Ibn al-Biṭriq was made from a Middle Platonic paraphrase and epitome of the *Timaeus* (such as those by Eudorus, Arius Didymus and Poseidonius or the Neopythagorean Περὶ φύσιος κόσμου καὶ ψυχᾶς attributed to Timaeus Locrus) or, more probably, from later Neoplatonic *hypommēmata* on the *Timaeus* (such as those composed by Calvenus Taurus and Porphyry): cf. Arnzen (2011), 202–206.

¹⁷⁹ Endress (1966). I am very grateful to prof. G. Serra who gave me his copy of prof. Endress' Dissertation at the beginning of my studies.

¹⁸⁰ Schoonheim (2000).

¹⁸¹ Brugman–Drossaart Lulofs, (1971); Kruk (1979).

¹⁸² Arnzen (1998), in particular 104.

¹⁸³ See the list of the Arabic translations of Alexander of Aphrodisias in Dietrich (1964), and the up-to-date studies in Aouad–Goulet (1989), 125–139, and in Fazzo (2003), 61–70. On the *quaestiones* and the other texts by Alexander of Aphrodisias re-elaborated in al-Kindi's circle see: Endress (2002), 19–74; Fazzo–Wiesner (1993), 119–153. On the writings of other authors attributed to Alexander within al-Kindi's circle see above note 163 and Hasnawi (1994), 53–109.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Ullmann (1961); Gutas (1975); Daiber (1980); Rudolph (1989); De Smet (1998); Overwien (2005). See also D'Ancona (2005), 305–337.

¹⁸⁵ Endress (1997a), 59. For the relevance of these texts in later Arabic Islamic philosophy and in particular in 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf al-Baġdādī see Chapter 3, 209–268.

¹⁸⁶ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, I. 251.25–252.1 Flügel; 312.11–17 Taġaddud.

Thanks to one of Averroes' last works, the so-called *Long Commentary* on the *Metaphysics* (*Tafsīr Mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*),¹⁸⁷ surviving in ms Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, or. 2074 (*cod. arab.* 1692),¹⁸⁸ we have access to the main testimony of the direct tradition of the *Metaphysics* in the Arabic world. The lemmata of Averroes' commentary quote literally eleven of the fourteen books of Aristotle's treatise – all the books except K, M and N. The preserved versions are those of several translators, active at different stages of the Greek-Arabic translation movement. The Arabic translations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* used by Averroes are divided into lemmata of variable length, each of them accompanied by a paraphrase-commentary; the lemmata are usually introduced by the formula “*qāla Ḍīrīṭū*, Aristotle said”, and in the commentary (*tafsīr*) the sentences of the text, quoted again, give rise to a discussion of the doctrinal and textual problems.¹⁸⁹ In his explanations, Averroes occasionally quotes alternative translations, too. The following table shows the comprehensive list of the different translations used by Averroes, either in the lemmata, in the commentary of the *Long Commentary*, or transcribed in the margins of Leiden manuscript.¹⁹⁰

BOOKS	Translations of lemmata	Passages quoted in the commentary	Translations copied in the margins
α	Iṣḥāq (until 995a17) Uṣṭāt (?; 995a17–20) ¹⁹¹	Uṣṭāt	Uṣṭāt (until 995a17)
A	Nazīf (from 987a6)		
B	Uṣṭāt		
Γ	Uṣṭāt	Iṣḥāq (?)	
Δ	Uṣṭāt		

¹⁸⁷ Bouyges (1990³).

¹⁸⁸ The manuscript Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, or. 2074 (*cod. arab.* 1692) has been described by M.J. de Goeje, *Catalogus Codicum Orientalium Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae*, V. 324–325, n. 2821 and by Bouyges (1990³), Notice XXVI–LII.

¹⁸⁹ On the structure of *Metaphysics* according to Averroes, see Arnzen (2010a), 375–410.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Bouyges (1990³), Notice CXXVII–CXXXII; Peters (1968a), 49–52; see the review to Peters' work in Daiber (1970), 538–547; Genequand (1984), 5–11; Martin (1989), 528–534; Martini Bonadeo (2003), 259–264; Bertolacci (2005), 241–275; Bertolacci (2006), 5–35.

¹⁹¹ Ibidem, p. 14.

BOOKS	Translations of lemmata	Passages quoted in the commentary	Translations copied in the margins
E	Uṣṭāt		
Z	Uṣṭāt		
H	Uṣṭāt		
Θ	Uṣṭāt	Iṣḥāq (?)	
I	Uṣṭāt	Iṣḥāq (?)	
Λ	Mattā (until 1072b16) Uṣṭāt (1072b16–1073a13) Mattā (from 1073a14)	Uṣṭāt Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī Šamlī (?) Iṣḥāq (?)	Uṣṭāt (until 1072b16) Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (1070a5–7)

The table above shows that the first two books of the Aristotelian treatise appear in reverse order with respect to the Greek tradition: α precedes A. Two different translations of α are extant: the Leiden manuscript preserves the translation made by Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. 910) in the lemmata of Averroes' commentary,¹⁹² but it also contains another translation of Aristotle's text, copied in the margins and ascribed to Uṣṭāt (ninth century),¹⁹³ a very literal version, elaborated directly from the Greek.¹⁹⁴ On the basis of the textual study of the two versions, I have reached the conclusion that these two Arabic versions of α at times follow variant

¹⁹² Badawī (1947), 48–49, claims that a fragmentary copy of the version prepared by Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn of α survived in ms. Dār al-kutub *Ḥikma* 6. See also Gutas (1987), 8–17. Moreover Iṣḥāq's translation of α is also extant independently of Averroes' Long Commentary. It is the version quoted and commented upon by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī in his commentary on *Metaphysics Alpha Elatton*: Miškāt (1967); Badawī (1973), 168–203; Khalifāt (1988), 220–262. In Martini Bonadeo (2003a), 69–96; Martini Bonadeo (2007a), 7–20, I argue that Iṣḥāq's translation of α is preserved in a more complete way in Yaḥyā's commentary than in Averroes' *Long Commentary*. I also point out that Yaḥyā had at his disposal Arabic translation(s) of α other than that by Iṣḥāq. Bertolacci (2005), 252, note 29, and Bertolacci (2006), 15, suggests that the version quoted and commented upon by Yaḥyā was probably the version used by Avicenna in his paraphrase of this book within the *Ilāhiyyāt*.

¹⁹³ On Uṣṭāt see Nasrallah (1976), 319–353.

¹⁹⁴ Endress (1992), 7–23.

readings of the tradition of the Greek text and so are reciprocally interdependent.¹⁹⁵

Concerning A 5, 987a6 and the following,¹⁹⁶ Averroes uses the translation made by Naẓīf (tenth century), who is not mentioned in the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm, among the translators of the *Metaphysics*, but is mentioned as a physician and a mathematician.¹⁹⁷ No other versions of this book are recorded: this fact might mean that book A was lost. Alternatively, for programmatic and theoretical reasons, it might not have survived in Uṣṭāṭ's translation, which is constantly in use in Averroes' commentary for the other parts of the *Metaphysics*. In *La tradizione araba della Metafisica di Aristotele. Libri α-A*,¹⁹⁸ I raised the question of whether the first translation into Arabic of the *Metaphysics* commissioned by al-Kindī to Uṣṭāṭ did or did not include the version of book A. I came to the following conclusions: 1. Al-Kindī was familiar with book A, because he reworked some of the doctrines from this book in his *al-Falsafa al-Ūlā*. The fact that he does not quote the passages as accurately as he does for book α can be explained by assuming that he knew this book incompletely. 2. It is not by chance that book A was known, but it did not enjoy enough circulation to ensure its survival in the corpus produced within al-Kindī's circle. I proposed that a possible reason was the idea of the doctrinal unity of Greek thought, promoted, as we will see, in the circle of Hellenists and translators gathered around al-Kindī. They selected some metaphysical works with the aim of showing the coherence between Greek metaphysics and the *tawḥīd*.

¹⁹⁵ It is commonly assumed that the translation by Iṣḥāq is simply a revision of the more ancient translation made by Uṣṭāṭ: cf. Walzer (1958), 217–231; Mattock (1987), 73–102. In Martini Bonadeo (2002), 75–112, I show on the contrary that the two translations are reciprocally independent. See also Biesterfeldt (1995), 137–192.

¹⁹⁶ We lack the first four chapters and part of the fifth.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, I. 266.2 Flügel; Nasrallah (1974), 303–312; Kraemer (1986), 132–134. We find the name Naẓīf ibn Yumn (Ayman) in the margin of f. 7v (at the beginning of book A) in the manuscript Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, or. 2074 (*cod. arab.* 1692). Besides in f. 1r there is an annotation of three lines which ascribes to the same translator not only the version of book A, but also that of book thirteen – N –: cf. Bouyges (1990³), *Notice* LVI, LXI e CXXII–CXXIII). Naẓīf ibn Yumn (Ayman) al-Rūmī, the Melchite, was a physician and translator of treatises on medicine and, as we read in the *Fihrist* (I.266 Flügel), of the tenth chapter of Euclid's *Elements*. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aʿibbā'*, I.238 Müller, states that Naẓīf was an expert in languages and translated directly from Greek into Arabic at a time when most translators had to work from Syriac. Thus he may have been able to translate directly from Greek book A without any Syriac intermediary. As I have observed in Martini Bonadeo (2001), 173–206 and in particular 184 note 44, Naẓīf's translation presents some misunderstandings of the Greek text, due, it seems to me, to his inability to recognize structures and particles proper to the Greek language.

¹⁹⁸ Martini Bonadeo (2002), 80–97.

This criterion was clearly incompatible with the dialectic competition between Pre-Socratic and Platonic ontology, on one hand, and Aristotelian ontology on the other, which is the main focus of book A 3.¹⁹⁹ In the tradition of *falsafa* after al-Kindī, there is further confirmation that book A was known and considered an authentic Aristotelian text. Passages from it, lost in Naẓīf's translation, are present – in all likelihood in a different translation from Naẓīf's one – in Avicenna's *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*,²⁰⁰ in al-Šahrastānī's *Kitāb al-Mīlal wa-al-niḥal*²⁰¹ and in 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*.²⁰² In addition, the first chapter of A – a part of the text which has not survived in the *Metaphysica Nova* – is preserved in an Arabic-Latin translation in the thirteenth century ms. Città del Vaticano, Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana, *Ottob. Lat.* 2048.²⁰³

Book B, which is full of gaps, does exist in Uṣṭāṭ's translation. For this book, another translation is mentioned in the *Fihrist* as well as the commentary by Syrianus. This translation is also recorded in the catalogue of

¹⁹⁹ Bertolacci (2005), 247 and note 16; Bertolacci (2006), 11 and note 18, maintains that: i. it is safer to assume that Uṣṭāṭ's translation was not an integral one; ii. it originally encompassed only books α-M (with the exclusion of A and N); iii. together with the absence of books A and N, the presence of book M in Uṣṭāṭ's translation has to be highlighted; iv. "the presence of book M in Uṣṭāṭ's translation... excludes ...the possibility of invoking the Platonism of Kindī's circle... in order to explain the fact that this translation did not include book A (this line of interpretation is suggested by Martini, "The Arabic version", pp. 182–183; "La tradizione araba", p. 112 [sic]). Since book M (present in Uṣṭāṭ's translation) is no less anti-Platonic than book A, the anti-Platonic character of A appears to be unrelated to its absence from Uṣṭāṭ's translation". Unfortunately, the thesis referred to by Bertolacci as mine is not so: rather, I argued that the anti-Platonic character of A was probably the reason why this book, once translated – complete or probably incomplete – did not reach such a wide circulation, which would have ensured its survival in the corpus produced within al-Kindī's circle: Martini Bonadeo (2001), 182; Martini Bonadeo (2002), 91, 111. It would be useful to discuss the same hypothesis for book M which was translated by Uṣṭāṭ, but which also lacked circulation in al-Kindī's circle. I will not venture to say that Uṣṭāṭ did not translate book A on the basis of a few lines in the *Fihrist*; the testimony of Ibn al-Nadīm has value only if we can show that the first two books were not postponed in the copy of the Greek text translated into Arabic, or in the arrangement chosen by Uṣṭāṭ in which Ibn al-Nadīm had knowledge of the text. Besides, the indication of book Λ as the eleventh book in the *Fihrist* certainly fits with the absence of A, but also with the absence of K. An argument *e silentio* (like the one proposed by Bertolacci in note 13) is not enough to prove the absence of the first book of the *Metaphysics* from Uṣṭāṭ's translation. Hence my interpretation of the translation movement regarding the *Metaphysics* is in any case wholly in the light of a concordistic view between Plato and Aristotle – cf. Bertolacci (2005), 274, note 86; Bertolacci (2006), 35, note 86 – rather the concordistic view played an important role in what Bertolacci calls the first stage of the transmission of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Arabic, the one associated with the circle of al-Kindī.

²⁰⁰ Bertolacci (1999), 205–231; Bertolacci (2005), 260–263; Bertolacci (2006), 22–24.

²⁰¹ Bertolacci (2005), 263–268; Bertolacci (2006), 24–29.

²⁰² Neuwirth (1977–78), 97–100; Martini Bonadeo (2002), 93–97.

²⁰³ Martini Bonadeo (2001).

Yahyā ibn ‘Adī’s library (d. 974).²⁰⁴ Uṣṭāṭ’s translation also seems to be in use for book Γ, but Averroes also quotes a different translation, which could have been made by Ishāq.²⁰⁵ The two following books, Δ and E, are preserved in Uṣṭāṭ’s version and we have no mention of other translations. Uṣṭāṭ translated Z, which is used by Averroes in the lemmata, but the latter also quotes Nicolaus Damascenus’ compendium in his commentary.²⁰⁶ Concerning H, Averroes only uses Uṣṭāṭ’s version. For Θ and I, he quotes Uṣṭāṭ’s translation in the lemmata, but in the commentary he makes use of a second translation, commonly ascribed to Ishāq.

Concerning book K, neither the translation nor Averroes’s commentary are extant. Nevertheless, Averroes provides a description of its contents in the introduction to his commentary on Λ,²⁰⁷ designating this book with the letter *Yā*. He states that he has not found book *K* in the order of letters and that this book has not come down to him.²⁰⁸ M. Bouyges considered the above-mentioned statement on *K* as indicating that Averroes did not know of book *K*.²⁰⁹ For C. Genequand, there is not sufficient evidence to decide whether book *K* had been translated into Arabic or not, but in view of the fact that neither *K* nor its contents are mentioned in another summary placed at the beginning of book *Z*, it is more likely that *K* was never translated, or at any rate did not figure in any of the versions used by Averroes.²¹⁰ A. Bertolacci, on the contrary, emphasizes the fact that the passage on *K* in the preface to Λ only attests that Averroes did not know this book as *Kāf* but as *Yā*. Two conclusions follow: i. Averroes might have been directly acquainted with *K*, which he probably knew in Uṣṭāṭ’s translation. ii. Averroes did not originally include *K* in the lemmata and the commentary of his *Tafsīr* is less certain than is portrayed by Bouyges.²¹¹

²⁰⁴ Endress (1977), 7. Cf. Bauloye (2002), note 210.

²⁰⁵ Bertolacci (2004).

²⁰⁶ Bauloye (1996), 281–289; Bauloye (1997), 53–73.

²⁰⁷ The so-called “prologue” to Λ was examined in the past in order to determine its authenticity and to establish to what extent its contents derived from Alexander’s Commentary on Λ, lost in Greek but reflected in Averroes’ text. Cf. Freudenthal (1885), who did not include the prologue among Alexander’s Fragments; Genequand (1986), 7–9, who discusses the prologue and states that Averroes did not stick to the letter of Alexander’s words, but interspersed Alexander’s text with remarks of his own. Gutas (1987a), 122–126, has shown that the description of the books of the *Metaphysics* presented in Averroes’ introduction to Λ is distinct from Averroes’ account of the prologue of Alexander’s Commentary on this book. Hence, Averroes was aware of the existence of book *K*.

²⁰⁸ Bouyges (1990³), 1404, 1–11.

²⁰⁹ Bouyges (1990³), Notice CLI.

²¹⁰ Genequand (1986), 9.

²¹¹ Bertolacci (2005), 250 and note 22; Bertolacci (2006), 18 and note 48.

In my opinion, we still lack a decisive argument to solve the confused state of affairs on this book.²¹²

The data regarding book Λ are particularly complex. This theological book of the *Metaphysics* par excellence was translated six times in the formative period of *falsafa*, a symptom of the extraordinary interest generated by the Aristotelian teaching on the First Principle.²¹³ In the lemmata of Averroes' commentary, book Λ appears in two different translations. From line 1069a18 (the beginning of the book) to line 1072b16, Averroes uses the translation from Syriac by Abū Bišr Mattā (d. 940),²¹⁴ the translator of Alexander's commentary on Λ and probably the author of the translation of Themistius' paraphrase of this book.²¹⁵ From line 1072b 16 to the end of Λ , Averroes goes back to the translation ascribed to Uṣṭāt.²¹⁶ Averroes' commentary on this book is particularly important because it reflects and partially conserves the commentary of Alexander of Aphrodisias, lost in Greek.²¹⁷ In addition, Averroes quotes the translation

²¹² We must recall that al-Fārābī in the *Fī aḡrād mā ba'd al-ṭab'ā* (cf. below note 337) also seems to have knowledge of book *K*, the contents of which are summarized in the treatise designated by al-Fārābī as the tenth.

²¹³ Cf. Ramón Guerrero (1985), 117–121.

²¹⁴ Cf. Thillet (1960), 114–125; Thillet (2003a), 361–400. In Martini Bonadeo (2003), 263, the reference to Thillet (2003a) has unfortunately shifted one line above under the title *f. Le traducteur Ibn Zur'a* instead of under the title *g. Sur Abū Bišr Mattā traducteur du livre Lambda avec le commentaire d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise et celui de Themistius*. Thillet shows that the model used by Abū Bišr Mattā (or by the Syriac translator on whose version Abū Bišr Mattā depends) was probably a manuscript in uncial script, whose text presented variant readings which cannot be found in the extant Greek tradition.

²¹⁵ The sources partly disagree about the Arabic translation of Themistius' paraphrase of book *Lambda*. In the *Fihrist*, (cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 251.25–30 Flügel; 312.11–20 Taḡaddud) Ibn al-Nadīm says that Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus translated book *Lām* with Themistius' paraphrase, but in the manuscript B of the Hebrew translation of Moses ben Samuel ibn Tibbon at our disposal and edited by Landauer [cf. Themistii *In Aristotelis Metaphysicorum librum L paraphrasis hebraice et latine*, CAG V.5, v; cf. Frank (1958–9), 215, note 2; Peters (1968a), 52], and in manuscript Damascus, *Zāhiriyya* 4871, which preserves the beginning of the complete Arabic version, it is maintained that Ishāq translated it and Ṭābit corrected it. Themistius' paraphrase has come down to us in two different redactions: in a complete translation and in a paraphrase. The beginning of the complete version, preserved in the above-mentioned manuscript, was edited by Badawī (1947), 329–333. The abridged version, probably the one translated by Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus, is preserved in ms. Cairo, Dār al-Kutub *Hikma* 6 and has also been edited by Badawī (1947), 12–21. Both versions are translated by Bague (1999). The possibility that this situation depends on a double redaction in the Greek tradition cannot be excluded: cf. Pines (1987), 177. Recently Farhat Taieb found a long quotation of chapter 4 of Themistius' text in the *Manāhiḡ ahl al-sunna* of Ibn Taymiyya; cf. Geoffroy (2003), 420.

²¹⁶ Walzer (1958), 417–436; Martini Bonadeo (2004), 213–243. Further information on Uṣṭāt's translations of book *Lambda* can be gathered from Avicenna's commentary on *Lambda* 6–10 in his *Kitāb al-inṣāf*. Cf. Janssens (2003), 401–416.

²¹⁷ Cf. Freudenthal (1885).

of Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī and another version which can be ascribed to Ishāq or to Šamlī (ninth century), an almost unknown translator, to whom, as we shall see, the *Fihrist* also ascribes a translation of book *Lambda*.²¹⁸ A fifth anonymous paraphrase of *Lambda* 6–10, edited for the first time in 1937 in Egypt and then a second time by Badawī, should be added.²¹⁹ The terminological similarity of this paraphrase to the version of Themistius’ paraphrase in one of its Arabic redactions should be considered in future studies.²²⁰

As for books *M* and *N*, neither the translations nor Averroes’s commentary on them are extant. Nevertheless, Averroes seems to be familiar with these books and provides a description of them in his introduction to *Lambda*.²²¹ Following an annotation of three lines in f. 1r of the manuscript Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, or. 2074 (*cod. arab.* 1692), book *M* was translated by Ibn-Zur‘a, while book *N* was translated by Naẓīf.²²² From the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm further information on the transmission of books *M* and *N* can be gathered.²²³ In his note on the *Book of letters*,²²⁴ he explains that the books of the *Metaphysics* are arranged according to the order of the Greek letters, beginning from the letter minor *Alif* (*Alpha elatton*). The first translation recorded is that by Ishāq, who translated a certain number of books;²²⁵ but chronologically this translation was not the first. In fact, after having maintained that the work continues from letter minor *Alif* to letter *Mīm* and that this letter was translated by Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī, Ibn al-Nadīm says that letters minor *Alif* – *Mīm* were also translated by Uṣṭāṭ for al-Kindī. Book *Nūn* was extant in Greek with Alexander’s commentary. Ibn al-Nadīm then mentions the translations of book *Lām*. The Syriac translation of this book was made by

²¹⁸ Cf. Bouyges (1990³), *Notice* CXXI.

²¹⁹ ‘Afīfī (1937), 89–138, ascribes the paraphrase to Abū Bišr Mattā; Badawī (1947), 48–49, ascribes this translation to Ishāq. For Thillet (1960), 121, the author of the Arabic might have been ‘Abd al-Masiḥ ibn Nā’ima al-Ḥimṣī. Cf. Gutas (1987), 13b.

²²⁰ I have observed this similarity in Martini Bonadeo (2004), 213–243.

²²¹ See above note 207.

²²² See above note 197.

²²³ Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 251.25–30 Flügel; 312.11–20 Taḡaddud; Peters (1968a), 49.

²²⁴ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 251.25–252.1 Flügel; 312.11–17 Taḡaddud.

²²⁵ Martin (1989), 532, claims that the text of Ibn al-Nadīm does not prevent us from thinking that Ishāq translated the entire *Metaphysics*. Bertolacci, (2005), 247–248; Bertolacci (2006), 11, tries to establish the number of the books translated by Ishāq by means of the extant translations and the indirect tradition. The extant translations encompass books *Alpha Elatton*, *Gamma*, *Theta*, *Iota* and probably *Lambda*. The indirect tradition (i.e. Avicenna’s *Ilāhiyyāt*) allows us to extend the range of books to books *Beta*, *Gamma* and *Delta*.

Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (808–873). Abū Bišr Mattā produced the Arabic version of the same book together with the Arabic version of Alexander's commentary on it. He also prepared the version of Themistius' commentary on the same book. Ibn al-Nadīm adds that book *Lām* was also translated by Šamlī. Concerning book *Beta*, Ibn al-Nadīm is familiar with commentary on it by Syrianus. The text of *Beta* and the commentary were translated into Arabic. He saw in Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's list of books this text with Syrianus' commentary written in Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's own hand.²²⁶

2.2. *Al-Kindī's Reading of Aristotle's Metaphysics*

A salient feature of the reception of the *Metaphysics* in the *falsafa* – already evident in al-Kindī's *Fī l-Falsafa al-Ūlā* (*On First Philosophy*) – emerges from a study of the different Arabic translations devoted to this work: Aristotle's *Metaphysics* aroused such a lively interest in the Arab world that it was translated again and again. Nevertheless, the autonomous rethinking of the newly acquired Greek knowledge and the finding in it a theological doctrine which was coherent and consistent enough to be harmonious and non-contradictory with Koranic revelation stand out immediately. However, the *Metaphysics* was received selectively by Arabic authors, who favoured the books on more speculative subjects compared to those on historical and dialectical arguments. Moreover, the translation of the *Metaphysics* was accompanied by different commentaries, but, as it has been observed, none of them present the Arab readers with the main disagreement of the Neoplatonists towards Aristotle's theology: a disagreement which convinced Plotinus to locate the divine intellect in the rank of a second hypostasis, reserving the absolute primacy to a prior and more simple principle, the One.²²⁷ The Arab interpreters focused on the basic agreement of the *Metaphysics* with the assumptions of the Platonic theology of *Timaeus*: causation, i.e. the idea that everything is in becoming, it is in becoming because of a cause, and the idea that the order of the parts of a whole is the effect of the architectonic idea of an intellect.²²⁸

²²⁶ Cf. above 22–24; cf. Bertolacci, (2005), 245 note 11; Bertolacci (2006), 8 note 8.

²²⁷ According to D'Ancona (1996), 60–61, in the commentary of Alexander of Aphrodisias there is evidently no trace of such a disagreement, while in Themistius' commentary we can find some of the typical features of the first Neoplatonic principle ascribed to the divine intellect of Aristotle – for example, Themistius adds to the theme of the perfect simplicity of the first Immobile Mover, the feature of ineffability, which is typical of Neoplatonic negative theology.

²²⁸ Cf. *Tim.* 284A4–B1.

The foundation of this agreement has been described by C. D'Ancona: the search for the true principles and causes of being, announced at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, and in *Metaph.* E 1, 1026a 10–23, was accomplished for the Arab readers in book *Lambda*, with its opening summary of the possible alternatives in the search for the principles (*Metaph.* Λ 1, 1069a 26–30), its distinction between the substance subject to becoming and the immutable subject (*Metaph.* Λ 1, 1069a 30–b2), the explanation of its becoming in terms of ‘non-being’ as ‘potentiality’ (*Metaph.* Λ 2, 1069b 7–20), and its appeal to the principle of completeness, which excludes the *regressum ad infinitum* (*Metaph.* Λ 3, 1070a 2–11). When, starting from chapter 6 of book *Lambda*, Arab readers met the argument which by beginning with the eternity of the circular movement, ultimately concludes the existence of an immaterial substance, eternally *in actu*, which is the cause of this movement (*Metaph.* Λ 6, 1071b 3–22), they saw in it the end-goal of their study into causes and principles. Such a substance, which moves without being moved, could act only as a final cause, i.e. as an intelligible object. The First Principle of movement was at the same time depicted as the highest term on the axiological scale – the eternal, supreme object of desire (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072a 30–b1). It was also conceived of as the most perfect model of motionless action (*Metaph.* Λ 6, 1072a 10) which does not depend on anything else, thought (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072b 14–19). Thus we have to keep in mind the equivalence – introduced into the Arabic world by the exegesis of Alexander of Aphrodisias – between the Agent intellect of the third book of the *De Anima* and this divine Intellect, which is the cause and principle of the being of all other things, which produces the eternal movement of the heavens with its immobile knowledge of itself. From this perspective, it not hard to understand how easy it was to merge the image of Aristotle’s First Principle with the image of the divine Demiurge of the *Timaeus*, the intellectual principle which produces motion by remaining immobile, which gives an origin to the heavens’ rotation and which is itself most excellent, generating excellence in the cosmos. Finally, the Arabic paraphrase of *Ennead* VI, 7 [38], in which the features of the causality of the intelligible principles is applied to the Intellect and transform it into a principle which produces the cosmos, because it coincides with the rational models of all things, contributed to merge the features of the divine intellect of the Platonic and the Aristotelian traditions. It resolved their disagreement over the existence and nature of ideas, and, of course, considerably altered both traditions. The intelligible world and its causality were placed in the divine intellect itself, according to the Plotinian pattern of the direct correspondence

between the supreme intelligent and the supreme intelligible. The latter, the sole ruler of the universal order, which lives a blessed life in eternity, purely intellectual, simple, and immaterial, was to guide the *falāsifa* loyal to the profession of the *tawhīd*, the divine unity, in their reception of Greek metaphysical thought.²²⁹

This unitary reading of the theology of the Greeks, which characterized the reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the formative period of *falsafa*, was inaugurated by Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī (795–865 ca.), the “philosopher of the Arabs”,²³⁰ who gathered together the circle of translators in which the first complex of Greek philosophical works was translated. To this complex, as we have seen, there belong not only Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, but also the paraphrastic selection from Plotinus' *Enneads* (IV to VI), known as the *Theology of Aristotle*, the selection of propositions from the *Elements of Theology* by Proclus reworked in *The Pure Good*, the paraphrase of *Timaeus*, Aristotle's *De Caelo*, and a compendium of Aristotle's *De Anima*.²³¹ In the treatise, *On the Quantity of Aristotle's Books*, al-Kindī gives the following explanation of the purpose of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*:

His purpose in his book called *Metaphysics* is an explanation of things that subsist without matter and, though they may exist together with what does have matter, are neither connected with nor united to matter, and the Oneness of God, the great and exalted, and an explanation of His beautiful names, and that He is the complete agent cause of the universe, the God of the universe and its governor through His perfect providence and complete wisdom.²³²

According to this point of view, metaphysics and theology are one and the same thing. In al-Kindī's main philosophical treatise, *On First Philosophy* (*Fī l-Falsafa al-Ūlā*),²³³ inspired by the above mentioned translations of Greek works, al-Kindī intended to propose a philosophical speculative

²²⁹ D'Ancona (1996), 62–65. Cf. Madkour (1962–63), 21–34; Hein (1985), 306–316; Adamson (2007).

²³⁰ We find the name ‘philosopher of the Arabs’ (*faylasūf al-‘arab*) in Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 255.21–22 Flügel. Cf. Flügel (1857): reprint Flügel (1966). For the two interpretations of this title cf. D'Ancona (1992a), 363 note 1.

²³¹ See above 36–37.

²³² Al-Kindī, *Fī kammiyyat kutub Aristūṭālīs wa-mā yuḥtāḡu ilay-hi fī taḥṣīl al-falsafa*, 384. 7–10 Abū Rīda (1950); Adamson (2007), 32 and its review: Martini Bonadeo (2010), 194–197.

²³³ Al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, ed. Abū Rīda (1950); Abū Rīda (1978²); new edition of the work in Rashed–Jolivet (1998), 1–101. See also Ivry (1974); Ramón Guerrero–Tornera Poveda (1986), 46–87.

theology:²³⁴ an ontology compatible with the creed of those who, like him, agreed with the *tawhīd* of the Koranic religion, i.e. those who believed in a God who is at the same time the First Cause and the First Intellect, who created the physical universe from nothing and who is provident.²³⁵

The treatise *On First Philosophy*, in the form in which we know it, is subdivided into four chapters; it also probably had a second part, lost to us.²³⁶ In the first chapter, after the dedicatory formula to the caliph al-Mu‘taṣim Billāh, al-Kindī introduces the whole treatise, discussing the object and the contents of First Philosophy as a science. Then, in the second chapter, he goes on to tackle two different problems. First, he presents his epistemology which, even though it presupposes the Platonic

²³⁴ Adamson (2007), 22–25. For al-Kindī, the philosophy of the Greeks is a “collective enterprise” (22) aiming at reaching the true nature of things, then moving to the True First Cause; the same holds true for Arabic philosophy. This is the reason why al-Kindī’s main treatise *On First Philosophy* can be considered as “an attempt to use philosophy to prove the central truths of Islamic theological dogma” (25): that God is one, the creator, and is provident. Philosophical and prophetic knowledge have access to the same truths, but the former requires study, effort and time, the latter anything only God’s will. Al-Kindī’s project is that of a speculative theology resembling the Mu‘tazilites of his times, but the materials used are different: al-Kindī makes use of “Greek philosophical texts for supporting positions within Muslim theology” (p. 25). Cf. Martini Bonadeo (2010), 194–197.

²³⁵ On the same topics see the following works of al-Kindī: *On the True, First, Complete Agent and the Deficient Agent that is only an Agent Metaphorically* (*Risāla fī al-fā’il al-ḥaqq al-awwal al-tāmm wa-l-fā’il al-nāqiṣ alladī huwa bi-l-mağāz*) in Abū Rīda (1950), 1.182–184; in Rashed-Jolivet (1998), 168–171; *On the Unity of God and the Finiteness of the Body of the World* (*Risāla ilā Muḥammad ibn al-Ġahm fī waḥdānīyyat Allāh wa-tanāhī ġirm al-‘ālam*) in Abū Rīda (1950), 1.201–207; in Rashed-Jolivet (1998), 136–147; *On the Quiddity of That Which Cannot Be Infinite and That of Which Infinity Can Be Predicated* (*Risāla fī Māhīyya mā lā yunkin an yakūna lā nihāya [la-hu] wa-mā alladī yuqālu lā nihāya la-hu*) in Abū Rīda (1950), 1.194–198; in Rashed-Jolivet (1998), 150–155; *An Explanation of the Finiteness of the Body of the World* (*Risāla al-Kindī ilā Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥurāsānī fī idāḥ tanāhī ġirm al-‘ālam*) in Abū Rīda (1950), 1.186–192; in Rashed-Jolivet (1998), 158–165; *The Explanation of the Prostration of the Outermost Body and its Obedience to God* (*Risāla ilā Aḥmad ibn al-Mu‘taṣim fī l-Ibāna ‘an suġūd al-ġirm al-aqṣā*) in Abū Rīda (1950), 1.244–261; in Rashed-Jolivet (1998), 176–199; *On the Proximate Efficient Cause of Generation and Corruption* (*Risāla fī l-Ibāna ‘an al-‘illa al-fā’ila al-qarība li-l-kawn wa-l-fasād*) in Abū Rīda (1950), 1.214–237; *On the Existence of the Incorporeal Substances* (*Risāla fī anna-hu tūġad ġawāhir lā aġsām*) in Abū Rīda (1950), 1.262–269.

²³⁶ In Al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, 1.162.17 Abū Rīda maintains that the first part of the treatise of Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī is complete. Ivry (1974), 188, observes that it is possible that al-Kindī provided a second part. Its existence seems to be convalidated by the fact that the extant part ends with the sentence “end of the first part of the book...” and by the testimony of Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih. They refer to al-Kindī’s work as his book entitled *On Oneness (Tawhīd)* and they mention not only the chapters we have, but also some others (Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih tells us to derive his quotation from the ninth section). The fragments are edited in Rashed-Jolivet (1998), 113–117, 129–131. Cf. Daiber (1986), 284–302. In the opinion of Tornero Poveda (1982), 111–122, the pseudo-*Theology* of Aristotle was conceived of by al-Kindī as the second part of his *On First Philosophy*.

doctrine of the two worlds, follows a clearly Aristotelian model: al-Kindī introduces the distinction between what is known per se and what is known by us empirically,²³⁷ the theory of knowledge as the transmission to the memory of what is received by sense-perception,²³⁸ and the need to set out the principles of demonstration first, such as the principle of non-contradiction.²³⁹ Then he distinguishes the field of physical inquiry from that of metaphysics.²⁴⁰ In the third chapter, al-Kindī states that it is impossible for everything to be by itself the cause of the generation of its own essence (*'illa kawn dātihī*);²⁴¹ finally, he goes on to list accurately the degrees of unity which individuals, species, genres, wholes and parts possess. In this way, by following a typically Platonic model, al-Kindī can reach the term *in se* from which all others derive their degree of unity. He speaks for everything of a Platonic participation in unity. Hence, he can conclude that, since multiplicity participates in unity, the un-participated unity must exist, which is the cause for many things to have some degree of unity.²⁴² In the fourth chapter, al-Kindī outlines the nature of this unity: it cannot be a mere numerical unity,²⁴³ it is neither a genre nor matter, form, quantity or movement.²⁴⁴ It is neither soul nor intellect.²⁴⁵ It must be the True One, the First Principle, superior to every predication and every possibility of knowledge.²⁴⁶ In this way, al-Kindī presents a rational metaphysical doctrine able to resist the charges of impiety brought by the religious orthodoxy.²⁴⁷

In the following two passages, al-Kindī sets out the most peculiar aspects of his reception of the *Metaphysics* and his parallel construction of the first unitary and original philosophical project in *falsafa*. In his understanding of what is First Philosophy (i) and in his re-interpretation of the First Mover of book *Lambda* (ii), it is possible to follow Kindī's effort in attempting to read Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the light of the other sources of the Greek *Metaphysics* – Platonic and Neoplatonic – at his disposal.²⁴⁸

²³⁷ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I.106.1–12 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 61.

²³⁸ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I.106.12–13 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 61.

²³⁹ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I. 107.9–108.1 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 62.

²⁴⁰ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I.110.15–111.14 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 64–65.

²⁴¹ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I.123.3–124.16 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 76–77.

²⁴² Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I.132.8–143.12 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 84–95.

²⁴³ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I.143.14–150.20 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 95–102.

²⁴⁴ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I.150.21–154.9 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 102–105.

²⁴⁵ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I.154.10–155.11 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 105–107.

²⁴⁶ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I.155.12–162.16 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 107–114.

²⁴⁷ Endress (1990), 1–49; Endress (1991), 237–257.

²⁴⁸ Ivry (1975), 15–24.

(i) On pages 97.8–98.2 of Abū Rīda's edition (1950) of *On First Philosophy*, al-Kindī maintains that the art of philosophy is the highest in degree and the noblest of the human arts. Its definition is “knowledge of the true nature of things”, insofar as it is possible for man. The aim of the philosopher is to attain the truth as regards his knowledge, and to act truthfully with regards to his action; this activity is not endless, for since it ceases once the truth is reached. The truth we are seeking cannot be found without finding a cause. The cause of existence and continuance of everything is the True One, because each thing which has being has truth. The True One exists necessarily, and, therefore, beings exist. The noblest part of philosophy is First Philosophy, because it ends in the knowledge of the First Truth, which is the cause of all truth; hence the philosopher is one who has understood the noblest among the things to be known, because knowledge of the cause is better than knowledge of the effect, and we have a complete knowledge of an object only when we have obtained a full knowledge of its cause.²⁴⁹ The knowledge of the First Cause has rightly been called First Philosophy, since all the rest of philosophy is contained in its knowledge. The First Cause is the first in nobility, the first in genus, the first in rank, the first with respect to the knowledge of what is certain, and the first in time as its cause.

Al-Kindī's text follows *Alpha Elatton* so closely – in particular *Alpha Elatton*, 1 and 2 – that it appears to be a paraphrase. According to al-Kindī, philosophizing means searching for truth: this search is not endless, it ceases when the philosopher has reached the truth; finally, we find the statement that we attain the truth only after having reached the cause.²⁵⁰ The Kindian text seems to accept implicitly the impossibility of going

²⁴⁹ On page 101.3 of *On First Philosophy* in Abū Rīda's edition (1950), there follows a passage in which al-Kindī maintains, only apparently contradicting himself, that the four causes are of four kinds, as the four models of scientific inquiry into existence, the genus, the specific difference and the final cause of an object; the object is fully known only when the full knowledge of its four causes is obtained and the four inquiries into it are successful. Ivry (1974), 121–122, observed that the reference to the four causes is given following a method of Hellenistic explanation registered in Eustratius' commentary on *An. Post.* II. 1, 89b 24 (Eustratii *In Analyticorum posteriorum librum secundum commentarium*, CAG XXI. 1, 9.9–35). In this passage the causes are linked to the four models of inquiry quoted by al-Kindī. The commentator in fact mentions on lines 9–19 the four models of scientific inquiry – ἐι ἔσται, τί ἔσται, ὅτι, διὰ τί. Then on lines 27–35 he connects the four causes of Aristotle's *Physics* to the four models of inquiry. This passage clearly echoes *Metaphysics* A 3, 983a 24–31.

²⁵⁰ Regarding the Aristotelian sources of the passage cf. *Metaph.* α 1, 993b 19–30 and *Metaph.* A 2, 982a 21–b 10. See the analysis of the same passage in D'Ancona (1998), 843–847, where the author focuses on the similarity of this passage with one in the *Theology of Aristotle*. Cf. Ivry (1974), 121–122; cf. Rashed–Jolivet (1998), 8 note 4, 102.

back *ad infinitum* in the search for causes of *Metaph. α 2*, 994a 1–19²⁵¹ in the description of the proper activity of the philosopher.

The novelty of al-Kindī consists in his characterization of the First Cause. His doctrine belongs to a clear Neoplatonic mould, since the First Cause is the True One, the sole origin of all the things. At the same time, it is strongly influenced by the two grounding tenets of Islamic monotheism. The First Cause is the True One who, as the cause of existence (*wuġūd*), makes things exist – by creating – and, as the cause of continuance and stability (*tabāt*), keeps everything in existence – by being provident.²⁵² Thus, on the basis of Aristotle's relationship between being and the truth of *Metaph. α 1*, 993b 23–994a 1, a l-Kindī is able to formulate a doctrine which reconciles the religious belief in the First Truth (*al-ḥaqq al-awwal*), one of the names of God in the Koran, with knowledge conceived of by Aristotle as the search for causes. This, of course, is possible only at the cost of a great shift of meaning in the Aristotelian doctrine on the *primum in genere* of *Metaph. α 1*, 993b 23–994a 1.

A further Neoplatonic characterization of the First Cause appears in the following passage, in which al-Kindī maintains that knowledge of the First Cause is rightly called First Philosophy, because the rest of philosophy is contained in the knowledge of it. This statement echoes, as it has been already observed,²⁵³ *Metaph. E 1*, 1026a 18–23 and *Metaph. E 1*, 1026a 29–32, where Aristotle says that if there is an immobile substance, the knowledge of it must be prior and, in this way, it must be the first and universal philosophy, because it is first; it will be the duty of this science to examine being *qua* being, i.e. what is and the attributes that, *qua* being, belong to it. Even though Aristotle focuses in these lines on the architectural function of the First Philosophy, by no means does he maintain that in the knowledge of the immobile substance all other philosophical knowledge is included. Knowledge of the Immobile Mover does not include knowledge of the other beings and their attributes. On the contrary, for al-Kindī, since the First Cause has, following the Neoplatonic model, all things within itself,²⁵⁴ knowledge of the First Cause has in itself all the rest of philosophy.

(ii) We have just seen that in al-Kindī's philosophy the First Cause mixes some features of Aristotle's doctrine with others derived from the

²⁵¹ D'Ancona (1998), 845–846, focuses on the influence not only of *Metaph. α 2*, 994a 1–19, but also of *Metaph. B 4*, 999a 27–28 and of *Metaph. Γ 4*, 1006a 8–9.

²⁵² Cf. *Ibidem*, 847–848.

²⁵³ Cf. *Ibidem*, 852 and note 59.

²⁵⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*, 848 and note 46.

Neoplatonic tradition. In the development of al-Kindī's treatise this fact appears more clearly, because the causality typical of the Neoplatonic One is connected with that of Aristotle's First Immobile Mover. The Aristotelian conception of a First Mover, which is pure intellect and pure act moving the heavens, ὡς ἐρώμενον, is in fact modified in order to fit with the cosmic model of the emanation and participation of all beings to and from the One.²⁵⁵ There are passages in the treatise *On First Philosophy* from which the co-possibility of the two different theories on the First Cause emerges clearly.

On page 114.3–19 in Abū Rīda's edition (1950), al-Kindī claims that motion is change and that the eternal does not move, because it neither changes nor moves from deficiency to perfection. Hence, he claims that the perfect object is that which has a fixed state whereby it excels, while the deficient object is that which has no fixed state whereby it may excel. Thus, the eternal cannot be deficient, because it cannot move to a state in which it may excel, since it cannot ever move to something more excellent or more deficient than itself.

In this passage, al-Kindī's treatise presents the generation of the universe as motion itself, and by focusing on its ontologically deficient status as compared with the immobile perfection of its creating principle, is also reminiscent of *Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072a 23–b 8. Here al-Kindī derives both the idea of an eternal principle, which is the cause of movement without being itself moved by something else (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072a 25–26), and the proof of its immobility, which is based on the idea of the incompatibility between perfection and movement (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072b 8).

Later, in pages 160.17–162.16, al-Kindī goes on to say that every multiplicity comes to be through unity. If there were no unity, there would never be multiplicity. This happens, in al-Kindī's opinion, because every coming to be is an affection, which brings into existence that which did not exist. The emanation of unity from the True One is the coming to be of every sensible object and of that which every sensible object has in itself. The True One creates all the sensible objects when it causes them to be through its own being. Therefore, the cause of all coming to be is the True One, which does not acquire unity from any other principle, but is essentially one.

The First Principle is described as the True One, which is in its essence that unity which we find in other things only through participation.

²⁵⁵ See D'Ancona (1992a), 363–422, also for the analogies between the First Principle in al-Kindī and in the *Liber de causis*.

As unity, it is the condition of being of other things; it causes them simply to be what they are. The evident reference is to the theses of Plotinus and Proclus, who, through the *Plotiniana Arabica*, played a primary role in the development of al-Kindī's metaphysical thought.²⁵⁶ In this passage, the only predicate attributed to the True One is that of being one through its own essence. Al-Kindī, in fact, inherits from the Neoplatonic model the theme of the ineffability of the First Principle's nature.²⁵⁷

Finally, al-Kindī ends his treatise by claiming that what has created existence is not eternal. Since that which is not eternal is created and comes to be from a cause, that which is made to be is created. The ultimate cause of creation is the True One, the First. It is the cause from which motion begins: al-Kindī uses the expression 'that which sets in motion the principle of motion', i.e. the agent. The True One, the First, is the cause of the beginning of motion in which the coming to be consists, and it is the Creator of all that comes to be.

Thus, in al-Kindī's interpretation, the causality of the First Immobile Mover does not consist only in causing the eternal movement of the heavens, but it also determines the coming to be of the universe from non-being. In this doctrine, scholars have recognized the influence, in a form not yet identified, of the anti-eternalist arguments of Philoponus²⁵⁸ on creation.²⁵⁹ In turn, the modality through which the universe was produced out of non-being was suggested to al-Kindī by the Neoplatonic model of participation in unity. In this way, the First Principle is the First Cause of an ordered series of causes, whose effect is the universe; at one

²⁵⁶ Ibidem, 396–404, 413–422. Cf. Endress, *Proclus Arabus* (1973), 242–245; D'Ancona (1995).

²⁵⁷ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I, 160.6–17 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 112. Al-Kindī remains faithful to the tie of the ineffability of the nature of the First Principle. Only at one point does he seem to contradict himself, when he ascribes to the First Principle an intellectual nature, in so far it knows: cf. D'Ancona (1992a), 421. This is probably due to the fact that the term *al-ḥākīm* 'wise' is one of the Koranic attributes of God, which is particularly important not only for the doctrine of creation, but also for the divine justice: Gimaret (1988), 253–278.

²⁵⁸ Philoponus was known in the Arabic world. Some of his commentaries (for example on the *Physics*) were translated into Arabic. His polemical works also circulated as the *Contra Aristotelem* – cf. Steinschneider (1869), Steinschneider (1966), 162; Kraemer (1965), 318–327 – and the *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, the only one in all likelihood known to al-Kindī: Anawati (1956), 21–25; Badawī (1956); Endress (1973), 15–18; Hasnawi (1994), 53–109. Moreover, some of Philoponus' theses adopted by scholars in the Arabic tradition seem to prove the circulation of another of Philoponus' writings, the *De Contingentia Mundi*, against which al-Fārābī had argued: cf. Davidson (1987); Pines (1972), 320–352, repr. in Pines (1986), 294–326; Mahdi (1967), 233–260; Mahdi (1972), 268–284; Troupeau (1984), 77–88.

²⁵⁹ Cf. Davidson (1987); D'Ancona (1992a), 393–395.

and the same time, it is the cause which transcends the series of causes, and which, in its causing things to be through participation in unity, neither diminishes nor changes, but remains the True One, pure, eternal, Immobile Mover, creator, the efficient cause of a creation out of nothing (*ibdā*), and transcending every predication. The True One, as principle of the unity and the being of all things, is the only one True Agent. The other principles, Intellect, Soul and the first heaven, are created by the True Agent and they are the proximate causes for the world of coming to be and passing away. They are called agents only metaphorically, since they are not pure act and act only as intermediaries, transmitting a causality which they have in turn received. Hence the sovereignty (*al-rubūbiyya*) of God, the transcendent cause of unity being itself, expresses his causality through intermediate principles.²⁶⁰

Al-Kindī seems able to provide such a description of the causality of the True Agent by joining together two different sets of doctrines.²⁶¹ As for the Aristotelian sources, he shares the thesis of the Arabic Alexander in the adaptations produced by his own circle of translators,²⁶² in particular, the adaptation of Alexander's *Quaestio* II.19 entitled *On the World and Which of its Parts Have Need in Their Endurance and Their Perpetuation of the Direction of the Other Parts, and Which of its Parts Do Not Have Need of the Direction of Other Parts*,²⁶³ reflected also in al-Kindī's *On the Proximate*

²⁶⁰ Adamson (2007), 69, states that in *On the true Agent* God as Creator only bears a direct causal relationship with the first creature, the heavens; then, they pass on the causal action of God to everything else. Al-Kindī seems to have in mind the Aristotelian chain of movers going back until the Unmoved Mover of the *Physics*, as well as the causality through intermediaries of the One, both in the Arabic Plotinus and Proclus. Adamson rightly raises the following problem: how does al-Kindī's description of creation as God's bringing being from not being fit with this model of God's action through intermediary causes? The idea is that for al-Kindī the process of generation and corruption is distinct from the process of granting and removing being: the first is accomplished by the intermediary causes, the second by God alone. "It would seem that God does indeed have an immediate relationship with every created thing. For He gives each thing its being. But on the other hand, He gives only being. Other, intermediary, causes must be invoked to explain the features of each thing that make it the sort of thing that it is" (p. 69).

²⁶¹ For the fortune of this model of interpretation still reflected in Averroes see Martini Bonadeo (2006).

²⁶² Fazzo–Wiesner (1993), 119, speak of a circular relationship between al-Kindī and Alexander's texts: "While the Kindī-circle's Alexander was closely followed by al-Kindī on certain points, al-Kindī exerted a reciprocal influence on the Arabic Alexander, who was largely a product of his own group of translators".

²⁶³ Van Ess (1966), 153 note 33: *Faṣl fī l-ʿalam wa-aiyu aḡzāʾihī tahtāḡu fī tabāʾihī wa-dawāmihi/hā ilā taadbiri aḡzāʾin uḡrā* (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 63v21–64r13). Cf. Fazzo–Wiesner (1993), 119–153 and in part. 152–153 for the English translation of the text.

Efficient Cause of Generation and Corruption and in *The Explanation of the Prostration of the Outermost Body and its Obedience to God*. According to the Arabic Alexander, in fact, (i) the heavenly bodies and their movement bring about and preserve the existence of all that comes to be, and cause all generations and corruptions,²⁶⁴ and (ii) God, the First Agent, originates, preserves, and perfects creation through the mediation (*bi-tawassuṭ*) of the celestial spheres which he created.

As for the Neoplatonic sources, al-Kindī endorses one of the most important doctrines formulated in the *Liber de Causis*. The doctrine of causality through intermediaries has been made famous by proposition 3 of the *Pure Good*, the *Liber de Causis* of Latin Middle Ages.²⁶⁵ As is well-known, the *Pure Good* was written in al-Kindī's circle on the basis of the 211 propositions of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, and it presents so many doctrinal and textual analogies with al-Kindī's *On First Philosophy* that one would think that the author of the *Pure Good* was al-Kindī himself.²⁶⁶ Proposition 3 derives from proposition 201 of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. We are told that every soul performs three different activities: the divine activity according to which the soul rules nature with the power derived from the First Cause; the intellectual activity, because the soul knows things through the power of the Intellect; and the animate activity, because the soul moves the first body and all natural bodies, since it is the cause of motion and, through motion, of life. The soul is able to perform these three activities because it is an image of a higher power: like the Intellect, the soul derives its causal power from the First Cause, but not directly. Indeed, the First Cause created the soul through the intermediary of the Intellect.²⁶⁷

It is worth noting that the doctrine of causality through intermediaries which was presented in this famous proposition of the *Pure Good* was described for the first time in the context of al-Kindī's circle's paraphrase of Plotinus' *Enneads* (treatise IV 7[2]), i.e. the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*; it was then attributed to Plato in the same context, and, finally, it became

²⁶⁴ See for example al-Kindī, *On the Proximate Efficient Cause of Generation and Corruption* (*Risāla fī al-ibāna 'an al-'illa al-fā'ila al-qarība li-l-kawn wa-l-fasād*) in Abū Rīdā's edition (1950), 226–227.

²⁶⁵ Cf. D'Ancona–Taylor (2003), 599–647.

²⁶⁶ D'Ancona (1995), 155–194.

²⁶⁷ Bardenhewer (1882), 63–65. Cf. Guagliardo–Hess–Taylor (1996), 19–20: the English translation by R. Taylor is from the Latin text, but in the notes he mentions all the points in which the Arabic text sounds different. Cf. Bettio *et alii* (2003), 307–311.

the primary doctrine (*al-qawl al-awwal*) of the *Theology of Aristotle*,²⁶⁸ as we can read in its prologue.²⁶⁹

Hence, once again in al-Kindī's eyes, the two main models laid out in the field of Greek metaphysics for the description of the nature and action of the First Principle are reciprocally coherent. He has established boundaries within which the following authors of *falsafa* were to move.

2.3. *Tābit ibn Qurra: An Antidote to al-Kindī's Neoplatonic Reading of Aristotle's Metaphysics?*²⁷⁰

Tābit ibn Qurra lived between 836 and 901 AD. A native of Ḥarrān, in northern Syria, he settled in Baghdad under the patronage of a famous family – the Banū Mūsā. Well-versed in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic, he was involved in many translations and compilation of compendia, and he was an active member of the well-known circle of translators operating in ninth-century Baghdad, around the famous translator Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq. Tābit ibn Qurra is the author of many scientific, astronomical/mathematical and philosophical works.²⁷¹

Concerning his knowledge of the *Corpus Aristotelicum*, the list of Tābit ibn Qurra's works written in his own hand, copied in 981 by one of his distant nephews, al-Muḥassin ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hilāl, and preserved in al-Qiftī's *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, records one compendium (*iḥtiṣār*) of the *Categories*, one of the *De Interpretatione* and one of the *Prior Analytics*,²⁷² as well as an epitome (*ḡawāmi'*) of *De Interpretatione*.²⁷³

In the *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a records only the compendium of the *Categories*, but he mentions another work by

²⁶⁸ Cf. D'Ancona's remarks in Bettolo *et alii* (2003), 307–311; D'Ancona (1990), 327–351 [reprinted in D'Ancona (1995), 97–119; D'Ancona (1992), 209–233 [reprinted in D'Ancona (1995), 73–95].

²⁶⁹ Badawī (1955), 6.7–11; Dieterici (1882), 4.15–17. Lewis' translation in Henry-Schwyzler (1959), 487: "Now our aim in this book is the Discourse (*al-qawl al-awwal*: the prime Discourse) on the Divine Sovereignty (*al-rubūbiyya*), and the explanation of it, and how it is the First Cause, eternity and time being beneath it, and that it is the cause and originator of causes, in a certain way, and how the luminous force steals from it over mind and, through the medium of the mind (*bi-tawassuṭi l-'aqli*), over the universal celestial soul, and from mind, through the medium of soul (*bi-tawassuṭi l-naḥsi*), over nature, and from soul, through the medium of nature (*bi-tawassuṭi l-ṭabī'ati*), over the things that come to be and pass away".

²⁷⁰ This paragraph is a revised version of Martini Bonadeo (2007b).

²⁷¹ Sezgin (1970), III. 260–263; Sezgin (1974), V. 264–272; Sezgin (1978), VI. 163–170; Sezgin (1979), VII. 151–152, 269–70; Morelon (1987).

²⁷² Al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 120.7–8 Lippert.

²⁷³ *Ibidem*, 118.2.

Ṭābit ibn Qurra, the *Kitāb fī aǧālīṭ al-sūfistā'iyīn*, probably related to Aristotle's *Sophistica*.²⁷⁴

In the *Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm mentions Ṭābit ibn Qurra's commentary on part of the first book of the *Physics*. In the list of Ṭābit ibn Qurra's writings, preserved in al-Qiftī, we find a *Šarḥ al-samā' al-ṭabī'ī* (*Commentary on the Physics*). Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a tells us that Ṭābit ibn Qurra had never completed it.²⁷⁵

Ṭābit ibn Qurra's familiarity with Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and the commentaries devoted to it is clearly indicated by the fact that he is credited with the correction of Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's translation of Themistius' paraphrase of book *Lambda*²⁷⁶ and by the fact that he is the author of a work entitled *On the Concise Exposition of what Aristotle Presented in his Book on Metaphysics of Topics That Proceed According to the Method of Demonstration, not Persuasion* (*Fī talḥiṣ mā atā bihī Aristūṭālīs fī kitābihī fī mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a mim mā ǧarā l-amr fihi 'alā siyāqat al-burhān siwā mā ǧarā min dālika maǧrā l-iqnā'*).²⁷⁷

This writing, only recently edited on the basis of two manuscripts, is greatly significant in a number of respects. First, it illustrates what kind of knowledge of the *Metaphysics* and the philosophical literature related to it Ṭābit and his contemporaries had in ninth-century Baghdad. In fact, Ṭābit seems to have used as his sources one or more Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics* available at that time: certainly Uṣṭāṭ's version made directly from the Greek for al-Kindī and, as we have seen above, perhaps that by Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn or Šamlī.²⁷⁸ Besides, he had at his disposal the *Physics*, the *De Caelo* and Themistius' paraphrase in one of its two redactions. He may have known the Syriac version of Alexander's literal commentary on book *Lambda*, Nicolaus Damascenus' summary of Aristotle's philosophy,²⁷⁹ Theophrastus' *Metaphysics*,²⁸⁰ Alexander's *On the Principles Of the Universe* (*Fī mabādi' al-kull*),²⁸¹ and a work by Galen, lost to us, but

²⁷⁴ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, I. 220.24, 218.15 Müller.

²⁷⁵ Cf. Peters (1968a), 30; al-Qiftī, *Tārīḥ al-hukamā'*, 116.18 Lippert; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, I. 219.28 Müller.

²⁷⁶ Cf. above note 215.

²⁷⁷ Cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, I. 218, 14–15 Müller; *Īḥtišār kitāb mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 384. My information on this text derives from the work of Bertolacci–Reisman (2009).

²⁷⁸ Cf. above pp. 29–35.

²⁷⁹ See Drossart Lulofs (1969).

²⁸⁰ Alon (1985), 163–217; Crubellier (1992), 19–45; Fortenbaugh–Gutas (1992).

²⁸¹ The *Fī mabādi' al-kull* (*On the principles of the universe*) ascribed to Alexander of Aphrodisias, lost in Greek, but attested in Syriac (Hugonnard-Roche [1997b], 121–143 and in

circulating in Arabic under the title *Fī anna l-muḥarrrik al-awwal lā yataḥarraku* (*On the Fact That the First Mover is Not Moved*).²⁸²

Secondly, Ṭābit's treatise on the *Metaphysics* offers a good perspective from which to observe how the Hellenizing Arabs of the ninth century, who were interested in the Greek heritage, reacted against the new metaphysical project elaborated by al-Kindī, shortly after its formulation. Ṭābit's *Concise Exposition of Aristotle's Metaphysics*, as Reisman and Bertolacci maintain, presented itself as an antidote to the overt Neoplatonism of the works of the circle of al-Kindī, by al-Kindī himself and his disciples – in particular, by Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Saraḥsī (833–899), to whom a work entitled *Kitāb fi l-radd 'alā Ġālīnūs fi l-muḥarrrik al-awwal* (*The Refutation of Galen Concerning the First Mover*) is ascribed.²⁸³ But, as we shall see, Kindī's theses are not completely absent from Ṭābit's work. Considering

particular 126) and in Arabic, presents problems of unity, authenticity, and transmission. The attribution to Alexander was called into question by Pines (1986a), 252–255 and by Gutas (1988), 215–21. For Endress (1997), 1–42, «à la base des versions diverses il y avait un texte authentique d'Alexandre sur la nature et la cause des mouvement céleste et sur le Premier Moteur immobile et éternel (...) à ce noyan ancien fut ajouté un deuxième texte d'inspiration néoplatonicienne sur la Cause Première en tant qu'intelligence divine» 16–17. We have two different Arabic versions of the same Greek original, both probably translated from a Syriac intermediate and an Arabic epitome. The two Arabic versions are entitled *Maqālat al-Iskandar al-Afrūdīsī fi mabādī' al-kull 'alā ḥasab ra'y Aristātālis*. The first was translated by Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd Allāh from Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq's Syriac version; the second is ascribed to Abū 'Uṭmān ad-Dimašqī, translator of some *Quaestiones* by Alexander, contemporary to Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq. The two versions are very close to each other and perhaps the second is a revision of the first. The text is edited: *Maqālat al-Iskandar al-Afrūdīsī fi l-qawl fi mabādī' al-kull bi-ḥasab ra'y Aristātālis al-faylasūfī*, in Badawī (1947), 253–277. New edition and translation in Genequand (2001). Cf. the French translation in Badawī (1968), 121–139; the two partial translations in English and German in Rosenthal (1975), 146–149, and Rosenthal (1965), 201–206; Gutas (1988), 215–217. The Arabic epitome entitled *Risālat al-Iskandar al-Afrūdīsī fi l-'illa al-ūlā wa-l-'ulū' wa-ḥarakātihī wa-ḥitlāfihā wa-ḥarakāt mā yaḥsud wa-yakūn*, is related for its terminology and style to the complex of translations from al-Kindī's circle. This text is edited in Endress (2002), 19–74.

²⁸² For the title εἰς τὸ πρῶτον κινουὺν ἀκίνητον <αὐτό>' see Galen's own list of his works in περὶ τῆς τάξεως τῶν ἰδίων βιβλίων (*Claudii Galeni Pergameni Scripta minora*, 2. 123.4–5 Marquardt–Müller–Helmreich). In Ḥunayn's list of his translations (Bergsträsser [1925]; reprint [1966], 51.5–9) we find the title *Fī anna l-muḥarrrik al-awwal lā yataḥarraku* and Ḥunayn himself remembers having translated this book in one chapter with his nephew Hubayš, during the Caliphate of al-Mu'taṣim Billāh, for Abū Ġa'far Muḥammad ibn Mūsā. He then adds that 'Īsā ibn Yahyā translated the Syriac version into Arabic because the manuscript that he had translated earlier was lost. Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn also translated it into Arabic. Cf. note 29 devoted to this text in Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), 723–724 in which the authors provide a complete bibliography and try to reconstruct the contents of the work through different testimonies.

²⁸³ This treatise by Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Saraḥsī is recorded by Rosenthal (1943), 57, note 21 under the title *Kitāb fi l-radd 'alā Ġālīnūs fi l-maḥall al-awwal*, the same mentioned in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, I. 215.20–21 Müller.

that Ṭābit seems to be an accurate reader of the crucial chapters of book *Lambda* of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, the fact that al-Kindī's structures of interpretation emerge in his thinking seems symptomatic of the extent of the success enjoyed by the metaphysical model elaborated by al-Kindī immediately after its formulation.

Ṭābit's *Concise Exposition of Aristotle's Metaphysics* is the first extant Arabic commentary known to us of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, or more accurately of its theological core on the nature and the influence of the First Cause (chapters 6–9 of book *Lambda*). Ṭābit's work is divided into nine sections.

The first introductory section is modelled on the Greek Neoplatonic introductions to Aristotle's works.²⁸⁴ Ṭābit begins to discussing the title of the work (ἐπιγραφή) together with Aristotle's intention (σκοπός): Aristotle wanted to investigate a substance that is not in motion (*Metaph.* Λ 1, 1069a 30–33, Λ 6, 1071b 3–5, Λ 7, 1073a 3–5), that is not susceptible to the desire for anything outside its essence (*Metaph.* Λ 9, 1074b 33–35) and that is not among the natural things subject to motion – things which of course he is forced to investigate in order to approach such a substance. The reference is to *Metaph.* Λ 1, 1069b 1, but also to *Metaph.* Z 2, 1028b 27–32, where the study of sensible substances is considered introductory to that of non-sensible substance.

Secondly, Ṭābit faces the problem of the apparent disagreement between Aristotle's doctrine and Plato's. He described essence, which is not in motion, and substance in a relationship of *causa-causatum*, because one single concept could not embrace them both.

In Ṭābit's opinion, the metaphysical research propounded by the two Greek philosophers consists in a theological investigation into “what is really one, since nothing can be said about it but from the perspective of its action and, in that case, relatively and from outside”.²⁸⁵ It is possible to observe, therefore, first the fact that in limiting the intention of the *Metaphysics* to the study of the First Principle, the *wāhid bi-l-ḥaqīqati*, Ṭābit seems to testify to a theological interpretation of this Aristotelian work, current among the Arabic philosophers before al-Fārābī.²⁸⁶ In addition, in Ṭābit there appears the Neoplatonic theme of the ineffability of

²⁸⁴ Cf. Simplicius, *Commentaire sur les Catégories*, I. 21–47, 138–160 Hadot (1990); Mansfeld (1994), 10–21.

²⁸⁵ Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), 736, 737.17–18 (Arabic text); see the analogy with the proposition 5 of the *Liber de causis* in Badawī (1955a), 9, where the First Cause can not be called as its first effect.

²⁸⁶ See Bertolacci (2001), 257–295.

the nature of the First Principle, as we have observed in al-Kindī. In *On First Philosophy*, in fact, the First Principle is described as the True One, which is in its essence that unity which in other things is present only through participation. The only predicate attributed to the True One is that of being one in its essence.²⁸⁷

Finally, Tābit considers the intentional obscurity (ἀσάφεια) with which Aristotle discusses this doctrine.

In section 2, the First Mover is described as “the principle and the cause of the existence and perdurance of the forms belonging to all corporeal substances”.²⁸⁸ Tābit demonstrates that the First Mover, in so far as it is cause of the movement of all corporeal substances, both those which exist and those which are generable, is also the cause of their existence. Tābit proves this thesis in three steps. (i) The existence of the corporeal substance is caused by its own movement through two intermediary causes, which are nature and form. (ii) Movement itself has a proximate cause, namely, the perfection towards which the moving thing is directed – a perfection suited to the nature of the moving thing and desired by it (*Metaph.* Θ 8, 1050a 7–8). (iii) Finally, the ultimate cause of every movement is the Immobile Mover. He is referring, of course, to *Phys.* Θ 5, 256a 4–258b 9 and *Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072a 24–25.

This thesis is reminiscent of the one set out by al-Kindī: “We do not find the truth we are seeking without finding a cause; the cause of the existence and continuance of everything is the True One, in that each thing which has being has truth. The True exists necessarily, and, therefore, beings exist.”²⁸⁹ Compared with al-Kindī, Tābit follows Aristotle’s text more faithfully, because he gives special emphasis to the fact that the First Principle, even if transcendent, is the First Cause of an ordered series of causes whose effect is the universe.

In section 3, less relevant to our purposes, Tābit presents two possible objections to the doctrine expounded in the previous section. It is in any case important to observe that Tābit starts to call the First Mover “First Cause” or “First Principle”.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Cf. for example al-Kindī, *Fi l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I. 160.15–20 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 113: “The True One, therefore, has neither matter, form, quantity, quality, or relation, is not described by any of the remaining intelligible things, and has neither genus, specific difference, individual, property, common accident or movement; and it is not described by any of the things which are denied to be one in truth. It is, accordingly, pure and simply unity, having nothing other than unity, while every other one is multiple”.

²⁸⁸ Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), 738, 739.14–15 (Arabic text).

²⁸⁹ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fi l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I. 97.1–12 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 55.

²⁹⁰ Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), *Commentary* sec. 3, 761–762.

In sections 4 and 5 Ṭābit presents two theses: (i) “the First Principle is the cause of the existence of the universe from eternity”,²⁹¹ (ii) the eternity of the universe does not entail that it be uncaused.²⁹²

First of all, Ṭābit establishes that when something is caused to exist by something else, its non-existence is not necessarily prior in time to its existence. This fact is explained by recalling the doctrine whereby the cause of the existence of something is not necessarily prior in time to its effect. Aristotle himself explains the contemporaneity of single causes in act and their respective effects in *Metaph.* Δ 2, 1014a 20–25.

The cause of the existence of the universe, therefore, is not necessarily prior in time to its effect, that is, the universe, because the cause of the existence of the universe can be prior or coterminous to it. Hence, when the universe is caused to exist by the First Mover, its non-existence is not necessarily prior in time to its existence. The First Principle does not cause the being of the universe as a cause which comes before the universe in time, but as a cause coterminous to it. Since the First Principle is eternal, as Aristotle explains in *Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072a 23, *Phys.* Θ 6, 259b 33–260a 1, it causes the universe to be from eternity. Aristotle himself proves the eternity of the universe in *De Caelo* A 10–12, B 1.

In section 5 Ṭābit reaffirms the perfect consistency of the eternity of the universe with the caused nature of its essence, even if he does not argue it. The attempt is to save in some way, besides the Aristotelian doctrine, creation. Ṭābit's doctrine of sections 4 and 5 can be usefully compared with a passage from the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*.

How well and how rightly does this philosopher describe the Creator when he says: “He created mind, soul and the nature and all things else”! But whoever hears the philosopher's words must not take them literally and imagine that he said that the Creator fashioned the creation (*al-ḥalq*) in time. If anyone imagines that of him from his mode of expression, he did but so expresses himself through wishing to follow the custom of the ancients. The ancient were compelled to mention time in connection with the beginning of creation because they wanted to describe the genesis (*kawn*) of things, and they were compelled to introduce time into their description of genesis and into their description of the creation (*al-ḥaliqat*) – which was not in time at all – in order to distinguish between the exalted First Cause and lowly secondary causes. The reason is that when a man wishes to elucidate and recognize causes he is compelled to mention time, since the cause is bound to be prior to its effect, and one imagines that priority means time

²⁹¹ Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), 740, 741.12–13 (Arabic text).

²⁹² Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), 742, 743.9–10 (Arabic text).

and that every agent performs his action in time. But it is not so; not every agent performs his action in time, nor is every cause prior to its effect in time. If you wish to know whether this act is temporal or not, consider the agent; if he be subject to time then is the act subject to time, inevitably, and if the cause is temporal so too is the effect. The agent and the cause indicate the nature of the act and the effect, if they be subject to time or nor subject to it.²⁹³

In section 6, Ṭābit ascribes will to the First Principle, the cause of the existence of the universe. Those who affirm the contrary advance that the simultaneity of the First Principle and the universe entails that the production of the latter by the former is necessary, that is to say, it happens because of the First Principle's the nature itself, not by means of its will. In addition, according to Aristotle, the Immobile Mover moves the first sphere by being desired as an object of desire (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072a 26). But Ṭābit notices that the perfection of the First Principle excludes the fact that any action on its part would contradict its will and entails that in the First Principle there is no desire, aversion or change. The First Principle cannot cause the universe to be by means of its own nature, since whatever is and acts by virtue of nature has desire and whatever has desire is caused; that is to say, it is something that the First Principle cannot be.²⁹⁴

Section 7 is the longest and most difficult and raises the following problem: the First Principle is not a body. According to Reisman and Bertolacci, this section is a amplified version of *Metaph.* Λ 7, 1073a 5–11, where Aristotle affirms that the Immobile Mover neither has magnitude nor parts, but is indivisible. It is worth noting that the transformation of the Aristotelian doctrine of the First Principle's lack of magnitude into one of the First Principle's lack of corporeity shows a trace of the influence of Themistius, who in his paraphrase of *Metaph.* Λ 7, 1073a 5–11 adds to the characteristics of the Immobile Mover the fact of being bodiless. Averroes, quoting Themistius in the exegesis of the same Aristotelian passage, also reports Themistius as regarding magnitude (*'izām*) and body (*ġism*) as equivalent.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ Lewis' translation 231 in *Plotini Opera*. Cf. Dieterici (1882), 13. 11–14.9; Badawī (1955), 27.7–28.3; D'Ancona (2001), 106–109; Plotino, *La discesa dell'anima nei corpi* (*Enn. IV 8*[6]). *Plotiniana Arabica* (*pseudo-Teologia di Aristotele, capitoli 1 e 7; "Detti del Sapiente Greco"*), 237.7–238.8.

²⁹⁴ Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), 767.

²⁹⁵ Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), *Commentary* sec. 7, 767–768. Cf. Averroes, *Tafsīr Mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*, 1636.4–5 Bouyges.

Aristotle's arguments are reproduced in the second proof presented by Ṭābit, who engages him in four different demonstrations, all constructed as *reductiones ad absurdum*.

(i) Every body is either simple or composite. It is impossible to imagine the First Principle as a body composed of bodies that are simpler than it, like its elements. We could assume that the First Principle is a simple body; but, since every simple body has a simple motion that is according to its substance,²⁹⁶ if we affirm that the First Principle is a simple body, we would also affirm that it is something in motion.²⁹⁷ We know that everything in motion is caused (*Phys. Z* 1, 241b 34–242a 50; *Θ* 4, 254b 7–256a 3), so the First Principle would have a cause. That is impossible.

(ii) If we assume that this principle is a body, then the best candidate is the body of the first sphere. Now, this sphere either has a soul or it does not. The first hypothesis is absurd since, because the power of every body is finite, and if the first sphere had a soul, in absence of an external cause, its motion would necessarily come to an end and the soul of the first sphere would be not responsible for it, nor would it be able to avoid this end. But the second hypothesis is also to be rejected: we would need a further and external cause to explain the motion of the first sphere, or, on the contrary, this motion would end by reason of the finite power proper to every body.²⁹⁸ In this second proof, Ṭābit reformulates *Metaphysics* *Λ* 7, 1073a 7–8, where Aristotle affirms that something cannot at one and the same time have magnitude and be an eternal mover. Nevertheless, once again Ṭābit speaks of corporeity and focuses not on the capability of the first sphere to move something else, but on the moving itself.²⁹⁹

(iii) In everything which has corporeal mass and magnitude there is something potential and something actual. Nothing that has something potential can be the First Principle.

(iv) Suppose the First Principle is a body, and every body is in motion: if every body moves toward a perfection and if every body desires the perfection towards which it moves, the First Principle will desire the

²⁹⁶ Cfr. Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), 768. At the end of the first proof Ṭābit recalls the question of the simple motion proper to every simple body and quotes two passages from *De Caelo* (*A* 2, 268b 22–24 e *A* 3, 270b 26–31) where Aristotle clarified that every simple motion is either around the centre, or to the centre, or from the centre, that there are as many simple bodies as simple motions, and that there are not as many simple bodies as the motions which can be divided into these three kinds of simple motions. But Ṭābit refers in this doctrine to bodies in general.

²⁹⁷ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafā al-ūlā*, I. 117.7–118.4 Abū Rīda; Ivry (1974), 70–71.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Davidson (1979), 75–92.

²⁹⁹ Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), *Commentary* sec. 7.

perfection towards which it moves. This perfection can be external or within itself. If it were external, this perfection would be more suitable as the First Cause and the First Principle; if it were within itself, the First Principle would not need any motion towards the perfection which is already in itself (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072b 8). Both hypotheses are impossible if we refer them to the First Principle which, therefore, cannot be a body. If we examine the above-mentioned alternative and speak of something which is a body, on the other hand, we would have to follow Aristotle, who demonstrates in the *Physics* that the cause of everything in motion is external to it (*Phys.* Θ 6, 259b 13–14). The Aristotelian incompatibility between perfection and movement (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072b 8) was used by al-Kindī to focus on the ontologically deficient state of the universe compared with the immobile perfection of the principle which created the universe. I have recalled in the previous pages devoted to al-Kindī and his reception of the *Metaphysics* the passage in which he claims that motion is change, and that what is eternal does not move, since it neither changes nor moves from deficiency to perfection. The perfect object is that which has a fixed state whereby it excels, while the deficient object is that which does not have a fixed state whereby it may excel. Thus, the eternal cannot be deficient, for it cannot move to a state in which it may excel, since it cannot ever move to something more excellent or more deficient than it is.³⁰⁰

In section 8 the theme of *Metaph.* Λ 8, 1074a 31–38 is developed. In it, Ṭābit claims that the First Principle is one. At the end of this section, Ṭābit ascribes to Aristotle the doctrine that “one arrives at the correct view about Oneness (*tawhīd*) only by way of negation (*al-salb*), meaning that there is no beginning, matter, or motion, to this unmoved essence and this First Principle”.³⁰¹ In this point, it seems clear that Ṭābit is using a topic already adopted by al-Kindī. Starting from an analysis of the different meanings of “one” presented by Aristotle in *Metaph.* Δ 6, 1015b 15–1017a 6, where one is intended as a numerical principle or first measure of a genus, indivisible as regards the quantity and the species, al-Kindī passes to one as non-multiplicity, i.e. oneness (*tawhīd*) transcending every predication.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ See above 51–56. Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I. 114.4–8 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 67–68.

³⁰¹ Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), 750, 751.17–19 (Arabic text).

³⁰² Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I. 159.3–161.14 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 110–112.

In the last section, finally, Tābit maintains that the substance of the First Principle is knowledge, the topic of *Metaph.* Λ 9. The First Principle is pure form, the source of every form. When it sees itself, it knows itself (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072b 19–20; *Metaph.* Λ 9, 1074b 33–35), but it has also seen the other forms and so it has knowledge of everything; it is the act of seeing and, therefore, its substance is science.

Reisman and Bertolacci remark that a similar development of the Aristotelian doctrine of the divine intellect can be found in Themistius' paraphrase: the divine intellect collects all the forms and the first intellect in thinking itself, it thinks all intelligible things.³⁰³ The influence of Plotinus in Themistius' doctrine is clear.³⁰⁴

Although al-Kindī proposes a negative theology of the First Principle and explicitly states that the True One does not have form,³⁰⁵ sometimes he maintains that by knowing the First Principle, we know all things, because, according to a Neoplatonic model, the First Cause has all things within itself.³⁰⁶ In addition, in one of al-Kindī's works entitled *On the Proximate Efficient Cause of Generation and Corruption*, he ascribes to the First Principle, notwithstanding its ineffability, an intellectual nature, in so far it knows. The First Principle is *al-ḥakīm*: like the Koranic God, it knows.³⁰⁷

In the first centuries of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, between 750 and 1000 AD, in peculiar social-economic, cultural and religious conditions, numerous translations of philosophical texts were made from Greek and Syriac into Arabic.

The metaphysical inquiry which had developed around the First Cause and the First Principle by the two main schools of Antiquity, the Aristotelian and the Platonic, was reconsidered. The different solutions of the two Greek philosophical traditions were considered consistent. This need to discover a consistent and unitary theological doctrine in Greek knowledge gave rise to the original character of *falsafa*. It is worth noting that the first stage of both the translation and reception of Greek philosophy was not subsequent in time, but simultaneous.

The first translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and its reception took place in al-Kindī's circle (795–865 ca). He read the Aristotelian doctrines on the First Cause and the First Principle together with those of the

³⁰³ Bertolacci–Reisman (2009), *Commentary* sec. 9, 775–776.

³⁰⁴ Pines (1987), 187–188 and Brague (1999), 37 and note 3.

³⁰⁵ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I. 160.14 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 112.

³⁰⁶ Cf. al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, I. 101.15–20 Abū Rīda (1950); Ivry (1974), 56.

³⁰⁷ Cf. above note 257.

pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*, the *Pure Good*, the *Timaeus*, the *De Caelo*, the *De Anima* and a number of Alexander's writings, and proposed an ontology compatible with the *tawhūd* of the Koran. To do that, al-Kindī constructed an amalgamation of the features of the First Cause in the Aristotelian doctrine and of those of the Neoplatonic tradition, which was somewhat incoherent. He associated the causality of the First Immobile Mover with the causality of the Neoplatonic One.

In al-Kindī's interpretation, the action of First Immobile Mover makes the universe come to be from non-being through participation in its own unity. By labelling the First Principle as the Immobile Mover, who is pure, eternal, the True One, creator, efficient cause of creation from nothing (*ibdā'*), transcending every predication, al-Kindī sets out the lines which were to guide the following *falsafa*.

Several decades after al-Kindī's activity, we meet Ṭābit ibn Qurra (836–901). In Baghdad where he lived, an amount of literature related to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was available: Themistius' paraphrase, Alexander's commentary, Nicolaus Damascenus' compendium, Theophrastus' *Metaphysics*, Alexander's *On the Principles of the Universe* and Galen's treatise *On the Fact that the First Mover is Not Moved*.

Ṭābit's thesis on the First Principle compares al-Kindī's against Aristotle's model, not without assuming some of al-Kindī's theses. His ambivalent attitude allows us to glimpse a reaction against the new metaphysical project which was constructed by al-Kindī in his *On First Philosophy*. This work, shortly after its completion, seems somehow to have imposed itself on other philosophical positions, or at least, seems to represent a model with which others must contend.

3. *Metaphysics in the System of the Arabic-Islamic Sciences and the Authority of Aristotle in the Peripatetic Circle of Tenth-Century Baghdad. Al-Fārābī, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, Abū l-Faraḡ ibn al-Ṭayyib*

In tenth-century Baghdad, during the decline of the 'Abbāsid caliphate and the following Būyid age,³⁰⁸ a circle (*maḡlis*) of physicians, philosophers and translators was formed. They devoted themselves to the study of

³⁰⁸ Cf. Endress (1988), 122–123. On the beginning of the Būyid age cf. Kraemer (1986), 31–102. On the socio-economic crisis and the contemporary cultural vigour of Baghdad during this period cf. *ibidem*, 26–27. On other intellectual Arabic developments, figures, and traditions of this time such as the Ismā'īlī thought, the Brethren of Purity, and the Neoplatonic tradition transmitted by al-Kindī's circle through al-Āmirī, Ibn Farīḡūn and al-Isfīzārī see Adamson (2007a), 351–370; Adamson (2008), xii–302.

Greek philosophy, that of Aristotle.³⁰⁹ This circle should be understood as an informal group of people linked to each other by a spirit of collaboration and through sharing a deep and genuine interest in Greek scientific and medical knowledge, in particular philosophy, on which, in their opinion, education should be grounded. School activity consisted of a teacher, his home, books, colleagues, pupils, and occasional visitors. The teacher sometimes met with individuals or small groups. On special occasions, open discussions were organized for huge crowds, often in the librarians' quarter. The teacher dictated texts and added his own comments. In the discussion sessions the teacher proposed a question, and theses and antitheses followed.³¹⁰

In the circle of Baghdad, members of different religions,³¹¹ adhering to the teaching of Mattā ibn Yūnus (d. 940), al-Fārābī (c. 870–950) and Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (893–974), copied and translated ancient philosophical and scientific texts which were then available. They paid considerable attention to the status of the text, as it is possible to observe in manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *ar.* 2346, which preserves Ibn Suwār's edition of the *Organon*,³¹² and in manuscript Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit *or.* 583, which contains Ibn al-Samḥ's edition of the *Physics*.³¹³ In particular, they tackled the problem of the relationship between Arabic-Islamic knowledge and the Greek tradition of wisdom, and between philosophy and religious doctrine.³¹⁴

As a typical example, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a records that Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, the Christian Jacobite teacher of the circle, a disciple in turn of Mattā ibn

³⁰⁹ Netton (1989); Nasir Bin Omar (1995), 167–181; Endress (1987), 400–506.

³¹⁰ Cf. Kraemer (1986), 6, 55–57, 103–206. Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (m. 1023) refers on these discussion sections in his *Muqābasāt* [Tawfiq Ḥusayn (1989)] and in his *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-l-mu'ānasa* [Amin-al-Zayn (1953²)].

³¹¹ The Christians 'Īsā Ibn Zur'a, Ibn Suwār and Ibn al-Samḥ are well-known, and the Muslims Abū Sulaymān al-Siġistānī [cf. Kraemer (1986a)] and Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, who seems to be more interested in philosophical discussion rather than in philological work. Cf. Martini Bonadeo (2011a); Martini Bonadeo (2011b), Martini Bonadeo (2011c); Watt (2005), 151–165.

³¹² Cf. Endress (1977), 32–34; Hugonnard-Roche (1993), 3–18.

³¹³ Endress (1977), 35–38; this manuscript is edited in Badawī (1964–65). Cf. Lettinck (1994), 4–6, 14–31 and *Appendix* 2, 33.

³¹⁴ The relationship between theology and philosophy in Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's thought and in the interests of his school was a question debated by G. Graf and A. Périer. In Graf's opinion, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī interpreted philosophy as *ancilla theologiae*; on the contrary, Périer maintained that Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī in his theological writings was first of all a philosopher and only secondarily a *defensor fidei* of the Jacobite church. Following al-Fārābī's teaching, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī considered theological notions symbols of philosophical concepts. Cf. Périer (1920), 82.

Yūnus and al-Fārābī, had an excellent knowledge of translation technique especially from Syriac into Arabic.³¹⁵ He is credited with the following Arabic translations of Aristotle's or other Peripatetic's works: the version of the *Categories* with Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary,³¹⁶ the translation of Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn's Syriac version of the *Topics* with Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary (books I, V–VIII) and Ammonius' commentary (books I–IV);³¹⁷ the translation of Theophilus of Edessa's Syriac version of the *Sophistical Refutations*;³¹⁸ the translation of a Syriac version of the *Physics*, book II with Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary;³¹⁹ the translation of Alexander's commentary on the *Meteorology*;³²⁰ the version of the *Metaphysics*, books *Lambda*³²¹ and *M*.³²² In addition, he made room in the Arabic world for some of Plato's works such as the *Laws* and the *Timaeus*.

The knowledge of Aristotelian thought in the circle of Baghdad is remarkable, not only because the Aristotelian *corpus* was known in its entirety – the *Organon* or the *Physics* are the best examples – and much attention was paid to the literature of the commentaries, but also because the writing of original philosophical treatises inspired by the Aristotelian sources – by al-Fārābī for instance – was a practice.

The Baghdad circle is crucial to the history of the tradition of the *Metaphysics* in the Arabic-Islamic world. (i) First, the teachers in this circle tried to place Aristotelian philosophy in the framework of a new system of sciences, which could integrate the Greek philosophical and scientific heritage with the independent sciences of Islamic civilization. *Metaphysics* not only became an integral part of the canon of sciences, it also acquired the leading position: as the universal science it was the architectonic science. There was also a re-definition of the role of the philosopher within society: Platonic political philosophy, integrated with

³¹⁵ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, I.235.12 Müller.

³¹⁶ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 248.24, Flügel; 309.7 Tağaddud; al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 35.10 Lippert; Endress (1977), 25, 32–33.

³¹⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 249.17–21 Flügel; 309.27–310.4 Tağaddud; al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 36.18–37.7 Lippert; Endress (1977), 25–26, 34.

³¹⁸ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 249.27 Flügel; 310.9 Tağaddud; al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 37.14 Lippert; Endress (1977), 26–27 and note 7.

³¹⁹ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 250.8–11 Flügel; 310.19–22 Tağaddud; al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 38.10–15 Lippert; Endress (1977), 27.

³²⁰ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 251.9 Flügel; 309.23 Tağaddud; al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 41.5 Lippert; Endress (1977), 29.

³²¹ Bouyges (1990³), 1463.3–8.

³²² Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 251.26 Flügel; 312.13 Tağaddud; al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 41.23 Lippert; Endress (1977), 27–28.

the traditional sciences ruling the religious community, became the proper task of the philosopher.³²³ This was the turning point in the assimilation of Aristotelian and, more generally, Greek philosophy.

(ii) Secondly, this circle was as the direct heir of the Alexandrian Aristotelian Tradition: the literary genre of the philosophical commentary was recovered in it. Through a philological comparison of many versions, the commentary became an aid in grasping the most faithful text. The commentary was once again the place where every Aristotelian doctrine was discussed and compared with the theories expounded in other passages, according to the traditional method of explaining Aristotle through Aristotle himself. Aristotle was the indisputable authority. In addition, following the Neoplatonic method of teaching, for every work the problems of the transmission of the text were re-discussed. In the introduction to the commentaries, the aim, utility, position, role and authenticity of Aristotle's work were analyzed.³²⁴

i. As for the first feature, namely, the systematization of knowledge, it is useful to follow the *Enumeration of the Sciences (Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm)*³²⁵ by Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (870–950).³²⁶ Here he proposed for the first time in the Arabic-Islamic world a system, which was meant to include and integrate

³²³ On this new figure see Daiber (1986). On this point see also the conclusion of Vallat (2004), 367–372.

³²⁴ For the doctrinal connections between al-Fārābī and his school and the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria and its "neo"-Aristotelian teaching tradition cf. Vallat (2004).

³²⁵ The Arabic text of this Farabian treatise, which was translated into Hebrew and Latin, remained unknown for a long time. Its 1st edition was in an Iraqi review of 1921 by M. Riḍā al-Šabībī (in "al-Irfān", 6 (1921), 11–20, 130–143, 241–257), based on a manuscript conserved in Naḡaf, passed practically unobserved. Only Bouyges (1923–1924), 49–70, faced the textual problems of the treatise and Farmer (1934) examined the Arabic text and the Latin translation of the section on the science of music. Only at the beginning of thirties a second edition of the text was published: the edition by 'U. Amīn in 1931 (*Al-Fārābī, Kitāb iḥṣā' al-'ulūm*, ed. 'U. Amīn, al-Sa'āda Press, Cairo 1350/1931) was based on a photographic copy of a manuscript preserved in Cairo (nowadays Princeton, University Library, *Yahuda* 308, ff. 71v–88v). The editor revised the text, collating it with more sources in the second edition of 1949 and in the third one of 1968. Another edition was made by Á. Gonzalez Palencia (*Al-Farabī, Catálogo de las ciencias*, ed. by Á. Gonzalez Palencia, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Patronato Menéndez y Pelayo – Instituto Miguel Asín, Madrid 1932, 1953²): this edition is based on manuscript El Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo, *Derenbourg*, 646, ff. 27–45. Concerning the other Arabic manuscripts which preserve the work, the passages quoted in other writings and the Hebrew translation of the text, see Zonta (1992), xvi–xvii; Zonta (2001), 65–78.

³²⁶ Maḥfūz (1975) has collected all the information about al-Fārābī from the Arabic sources. On al-Fārābī's works see the basic study by Steinschneider (1869); reprint (1966). Besides cf. the Introduction to Walzer (1985), 1–5; Ivry (1990), 378–388; the introduction to Zimmermann (1981) (1987²); Vallat (2004), 11–25; for a panoramic view of the editions, translations and studies on Farabian works up until the 1960s, see Rescher (1962).

both secular knowledge, organized according to Aristotle's classification, and the Arabic-Islamic sciences: philosophy and religion (i.e., the universal sciences), the rational sciences and finally the disciplines typical of the Arabic-Islamic linguistic and religious community, which became complementary parts of the same hierarchical system of knowledge. At the beginning of this treatise we read:

In this book we intend to enumerate the generally known sciences (*mašhūra*) one by one and to give a general survey of each individual science, also to point out possible subdivisions and to give a general survey of each subdivision. The sciences can be classified in five groups, that is: (i) linguistic (*'ilm al-lisān*), with subdivisions, (ii) logic (*'ilm al-mantiq*), with subdivisions, (iii) the mathematical sciences (*'ulūm al-ta'ālīm*), that is, arithmetic (*'ilm al-adad*), geometry (*'ilm al-handasa*), optics (*'ilm al-manāẓir*), mathematical astronomy (*'ilm al-nuġūm*), music (*'ilm al-mūsīqī*), technology (*'ilm al-atqāl*, lit. the science concerned with the transportation of loads), mechanics (*'ilm al-ḥiyal*), (iv) the natural sciences and metaphysics – or Divine Science (*al-'ilm al-ṭabī'ī wa-l-'ilm al-ilāhī*) – both with subdivisions, (v) politics (*al-'ilm al-madanī*), with subdivisions, jurisprudence (*'ilm al-fiqh*) and speculative theology (*'ilm al-kalām*).³²⁷

Al-Fārābī's system of the sciences should be compared with the two systems of the sciences which it aimed to join:³²⁸ that by Aristotle,³²⁹ as reworked by the exegetical tradition of Late Antiquity and that of the Islamic tradition. Following the Aristotelian model, the sciences are subdivided into the theoretical and the practical: the first aim at *θεωρία* and *ἀλήθεια*, i.e., knowledge of reality and the inquiry into the truth of things (mathematics, physics and metaphysics); the second aim at *πρᾶξις* and *ἔργον*, i.e., the action and the accomplishment of a task (ethics, politics and economics). In the *Topics*, the young Aristotle points out a further distinction: next to the theoretical and the practical sciences he places the poetical sciences, namely those concerning production.

In the Islamic world a different classification of the fields of knowledge slowly developed, based not on a distinction between the theoretical and the practical sciences, but by locating all the sciences which owe their principles, methods, premises and conclusions to human reason in a relationship either of harmony, or subordination or contrast with the

³²⁷ Transl. Rosenthal (1975), 54–55. See al-Fārābī, *Ihṣā' al-'ulūm*, 3.4–11 Amīn (1968³); 7.5–8.4 González Palencia.

³²⁸ Cf. Mahdi (1975), 113–147 and in particular 116–117.

³²⁹ *Top.* VI 6, 145a 15–16, *Top.* VIII 1, 157a 10–11, *Metaph.* α 1, 993b 20–21, *Metaph.* Λ 9, 1074a 1–3, *Metaph.* E 1, 1025 b18–23.

disciplines designated as Arabic: the traditional, legal, or Islamic sciences. These latter included two main branches: the sciences of language – i.e., the sciences concerning Arabic – and the religious sciences, where the former are considered as propaedeutic to the latter. The religious sciences included the reading and the exegesis of the Koran, the study of the *ḥadīth*, the *kalām* and the *fiqh*. The Islamic sciences are unified according to the event of the Koranic revelation received by the prophet Muḥammad and they are different from the sciences of the Ancients because they are not based on human reason, but directly on divine truth.

Thus, al-Fārābī's system of the sciences is novel and he, to repeat the words of the historian Šā'id al-Andalusī (d. 1070), follows a method "which had not been followed by anyone else".³³⁰ He ignores the criterion underlying the classification of the philosophical sciences into theoretical and practical as well as that underlying the distinction of the sciences into the rational (*'ulūm 'aqliyya*) and traditional-religious (*'ulūm naqliyya*). The set of sciences he describes aims to embrace all the generally known sciences (*mašhūra*) and a field larger than that of the philosophical sciences; it includes the sciences of language, the science of law, and that of theology. The Koranic disciplines are in this way integrated into the field of the philosophical ones. At one and the same time, logic, physics, metaphysics, and politics receive their final legitimating within the Arabic-Islamic sciences.

This complementarity between the Greek and Islamic sciences, systematically described in the *Enumeration of the Sciences*, is brought by al-Fārābī into an idealized historical perspective³³¹ in the *Book of Letters* (*Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*).³³² Al-Fārābī explains that after early rhetoric, poetry, grammar, and the mathematical and physical sciences, Plato then founded political science and formulated the ethical principles on which politics is grounded. Finally, Aristotle with his science of demonstration, produced criteria for rational certainty and substituted Plato's dialectic with metaphysics, which he intended to be First Philosophy.

As G. Endress has shown, al-Fārābī's new theory and system of the sciences was helped into existence by the work of his Christians teachers in the Aristotelian circle of Baghdad, starting from Mattā ibn Yūnus (m. 940). The teachers active in this circle found in the Muslim scientists of Baghdad

³³⁰ Šā'id al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Umam*, 53 Cheikho.

³³¹ Cf. Endress (1990), 20; Endress (1997), 1–42, in particular 31–32.

³³² Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, 142–53 Mahdi; English translation in Butterworth (2001); Mahdi (1972a), 5–25 (reprint 1993).

a keen interest in the epistemology of the sciences, and they proudly offered the Peripatetic tradition of logic as a methodology for rational discourse. To these teachers, the *falāsifa* from al-Fārābī onwards owe the recovery of an Aristotelian logic more complete and faithful than that which had been known hitherto to Arab readers. The full *Organon* was at their disposal and the *Kitāb al-Burhān* (*Book of Demonstration*, i.e. *Analytica Posteriora*) provided al-Fārābī with a coherent system of deduction and demonstration, embracing all levels of rational activity. This system played a guiding role in the division and hierarchical classification of the sciences leading to the First Philosophy, i.e., metaphysics. Al-Fārābī gave a hegemonic role to this demonstrative science of the ultimate causes of beings.³³³

In the *Enumeration of the Sciences*, al-Fārābī states that metaphysics or divine science, a more complete account of which is given in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, is subdivided into three parts. (i) The first investigates beings as beings and their attributes. (ii) The second investigates the principles of the demonstrations of the departmental sciences (mathematics and physics, but al-Fārābī also included logic) and corrects the wrong opinions held about them by the Ancients.³³⁴ (iii) Finally, the third part investigates those beings that are neither bodies nor attributes of bodies and examines whether or not they exist. Once their existence has been proved by demonstration, this section examines whether they are one or many. Once it has been proved that they are many, but finite in number, it examines whether they are hierarchically ordered in perfection or not. Once the conclusion is reached that there is such a hierarchy, the highest part of metaphysics establishes that the supreme rank of perfection of incorporeal beings is only one: the First Principle, above which nothing more perfect exists. This First Principle is absolutely simple: it is the first and True One, the cause of the unity and being of all derivative realities. It is God. The highest part of metaphysics also has as its own object the modes by which God, the first and True One, produces and rules all things. Finally, this third part of metaphysics refutes all the false views about God and his action.³³⁵

In his description of the tasks and objects of metaphysics as science, M. Mahdi has pointed out the discrepancy between this model, and in particular its third part, and that which al-Fārābī presents in his treatises

³³³ Endress (1990), 16–17.

³³⁴ Cf. Ramón Guerrero (1983), 211–240 and in particular 232.

³³⁵ Al-Farabi, *Catálogo de las ciencias*, 87.10–90 González Palencia.

of deeper theoretical value, the *Book of Letters*, a hermeneutic of the terms used in metaphysics, or the *Fī aḡrād mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* (*The Aims of the Metaphysics*).³³⁶

In the latter³³⁷ al-Fārābī claims that many people have supposed that Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is devoted to the discourse on the Creator, the intellect and the soul, and that the science of metaphysics and that of *tawḥīd* are one and the same: but this is true of book *Lambda* only. On the contrary, metaphysics has its own object, different from those mentioned above: it is the universal science (*al-ilm al-kullī*), which, unlike the particular sciences, studies what is common to all beings, for example, existence or unity (*Metaph.* Γ 1, 1003a 21–26). For this reason the study of the principle common to all beings, which we are obliged to designate with the name of God, falls under the universal science. Hence, necessarily, the divine science is part of this universal science, because God is the principle of absolute being, not of some beings and not others. The part of this science which examines the principles of being is the divine science, because these matters are not peculiar to physics, but are more universal than those dealt with by physics; this science is higher than the science of physics and comes after it: therefore, it is called “the science of what comes after physics”. Then, al-Fārābī claims that, since the science of a given object is also the science of its contrary, metaphysics is also the science of non-being and multiplicity. Finally, it investigates the principles of things, dividing them to obtain the objects of the departmental sciences. Thus, metaphysics, as in the tripartite division described above, and, in particular, the second part of it also has an epistemological task: to ground the principles of the particular sciences. In the conclusion of this treatise, al-Fārābī enumerates all the books of the *Metaphysics* with their contents (except A and N).³³⁸

³³⁶ Cf. Mahdi (1975), 130.

³³⁷ Al-Fārābī, *Fī aḡrād al-ḥakīm fī kull maqāla min al-kitāb al-mawsūm bi-l-Hurūf*, 34–38 Dieterici; al-Fārābī, *Maqāla fī aḡrād mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*, (anonymous edition Hyderabad). Cf Dieterici (1892), (reprint in *Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science*, XII, Frankfurt am Main 1999), 34–38, 54–60, 213–214; Druart (1982), 38–43; Ramón Guerrero (1983), 225–240; Gutas (1988), 237–242; Endress (1990), 19; Arnzen (2010a), 375–410.

³³⁸ Criticizing Druart's claim that in this treatise A and N are grouped together with α and M (Druart [1982], 39), Bertolacci (2005), 259 and Bertolacci (2006), 21 claims that books A and N are omitted (cf. also Ramón Guerrero [1983], 234). In my opinion the hypothesis of A and N being grouped together cannot be easily rejected. As we will see, there is at least one other example in 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī of the circulation of two books of the *Metaphysics* joined together. Besides, Vallat (2004), 15 note 1, suggests that al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-wāḥid wa-l-waḥda* (Mahdi [1989]) can be interpreted as a sort of commentary on *Metaphysics* book N.

However interesting Mahdi's remark may be, it is worth making some further observations. Far from contradicting the tripartite division of the science of metaphysics set out in the *Enumeration of the Sciences*, the passage which I have now summarized makes it even more evident that metaphysical science is meant to be the highest of the rational sciences: it is the universal science which studies the principles of being *qua* being. According to al-Fārābī, therefore, metaphysical science is ontology (*Metaph.* Γ 1, 1003a 31–32), the universal science, which is at the same time *both* First Philosophy and theology (*Metaph.* E 1, 1026a 18–25).³³⁹

An illuminating and fascinating study has recently investigated the role of Aristotle's doctrine of categories in al-Fārābī's concept of metaphysics as ontology and universal science.³⁴⁰ According to Th.-A. Druart, al-Fārābī's Metaphysics is the science of that which is outside the categories and grounds them. In the *Enumeration of the Sciences* and in the *Book of the Categories (Kitāb al-maḥūlāt)*³⁴¹ and more clearly in the *Long Commentary in Aristotle's Categories*,³⁴² al-Fārābī states that Aristotle's categories are single notions based upon sense-objects. Hence the immaterial beings, the universals that are not really single notions – as for example the 'void', a combination of three single notions: 'place', 'deprived' and 'body' – and the "transcategorical" universals which apply to all the categories and even to immaterial beings do not fall under the categories. Through an analysis of the *Philosophy of Aristotle (Falsafat Aristūṭālis)*,³⁴³ the *Book of Letters*, and the *The Aims of Metaphysics* – she shows that, according to Farabian Aristotle, the realm of categories "extends to all the sciences and arts, except metaphysics". Metaphysics is a new philosophical discipline and it has two different objects of study: (i) what is beyond the categories, such as the efficient and the final causes of what the categories and the various arts and sciences comprise, soul, intellect and the First Cause and (ii) what cuts across the categories, i.e., the most universal intelligibles: 'being'³⁴⁴ and the contrary relatives.

³³⁹ Contemporary scholars insist on the distinction in Aristotle's thought between a theological meaning and an ontological meaning of the First Philosophy: cf. Mansion (1958), 165–221; Patzig (1979), 33–49; Berti (1965); Leszl (1975); Berti (1977); Kahn (1985), 311–338; Frede (1987), 81–95; Berti (1994), 117–144.

³⁴⁰ Druart (2007), 15–37.

³⁴¹ Al-Aḡam (1986), I.89–131; Dunlop (1958), 168–197; Dunlop (1959), 21–54.

³⁴² Zonta (2006), 185–254.

³⁴³ Mahdi (1961).

³⁴⁴ Cf. Menn (2008), 59–97, devoted a long paper to the *Book of Letters*, especially to its relation with Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Δ and *Posterior Analytics* II and to al-Fārābī's concept of being.

If al-Kindī and the *falāsifa* before al-Fārābī (like Ṭābit) shared a theological interpretation of metaphysics, al-Fārābī, far from rejecting this, included metaphysics in the system of sciences, emphasized its leading role, and saw it as the universal science which inquires into and demonstrates the principles of being *qua* being, the science under which theology falls, but as its crowning part.

In his reflection on the metaphysical science, al-Fārābī does not limit himself to its epistemological *status*, but naturally discusses its contents.³⁴⁵ Following in the footsteps of al-Kindī and the first *falāsifa*, al-Fārābī is influenced by the Neoplatonic doctrine, and more precisely by Alexandrian Neoplatonism,³⁴⁶ as to what concerns the modality of action of the First Principle and its causal relation with natural beings. On the other hand, he depends more explicitly on Aristotle and, in particular, on the Arabic Aristotle of the origins of *falsafa* for the description of nature of the First Principle,³⁴⁷ as it emerges from his main works: the *Harmony of Plato and Aristotle* (*Kitāb al-Ġam' bayna ra'yay al-Ḥakīmayn Aflātūn al-ilāhī wa Aristūṭālīs*)³⁴⁸ and *The Principle of the Opinion of the People of the Excellent City* (*Mabādi' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*).³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ Cf. Druart (1999), 216–219.

³⁴⁶ Vallat (2004).

³⁴⁷ Druart (1992), 127–148.

³⁴⁸ The ancient sources credit al-Fārābī with this work: al-Qifṭī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 117.20 Lippert (*Kitāb al-itiffāq ārā' Aristūṭālīs wa-Aflātūn*) and Avicenna's correspondence with al-Birūnī: Abū Rayḥān Birūnī wa Ibn-i Sīnā, *Al-As'ila wa-l-aḡwiba*, 40.12–13 Naṣr–Moḥaqqiq (*Kitāb al-ġam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn Aflātūn al-ilāhī wa Aristūṭālīs*). The *editio princeps* was provided by Dieterici (1890), 1–33, on the basis of the mss London, British Museum, or. 7518, fols 63r-81r (dated 1105) and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, *Petermann* II 578, fols 86r-118r. In the Berlin ms the title is *Kitāb al-ġam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn Aflātūn al-ilāhī wa Aristūṭālīs* and in both mss. the work is attributed to al-Fārābī. This first edition has been reprinted many times in Egypt (al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-ġam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn Aflātūn al-ilāhī wa Aristūṭālīs*, in *Maḡmū'a falsafa li-Abi Naṣr al-Fārābī*, Makkawi ed., Maṭba'at Sa'āda, al-Qāhira 1907, 1925²) and in Lebanon (al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-ġam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn*, A.N. Nader ed., Dār al-Maṣriq, Bayrūt 1960). A new critical edition was provided by Naḡḡār (1999). The ms Diyarbakir, İL Halq Kütüphanesi 1970, fols 1v-23r which forms the basis of this edition and ascribes the *Fi al-ġam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn Aflātūn wa Aristūṭālīs* to al-Fārābī (fol 1r 6–8), was unknown to Dieterici and according to Naḡḡār (1999), 45, is the most ancient and complete of the mss of this treatise. I recently revised Dieterici (1890) and Naḡḡār (1999) in Martini Bonadeo (2008), VII-256. For the other mss of this work see Martini Bonadeo (2008), 32–33; Naḡḡār (1999) 45–51. Cfr. also German translation: Dieterici (1892), 1–60; French trans. Abdel-Massih (1969), 303–358; Spanish trans. Alonso (1969), 21–70; English trans. Butterworth (2001), 115–168. The authorship of this text was challenged by Lameer (1994), 30–39, who raises two sets of arguments against Farabian authorship of the treatise, one based on its literary style and the other on its philosophical contents, but as I prove in Martini Bonadeo (2008) they are not convincing (cf. also D'Ancona [2006], 379–405, in particular 380–381).

³⁴⁹ *Editio princeps*: Dieterici (1895); German trans.: Dieterici (1900). Other editions: Nader (1959), (1968²). The new critical edition is the posthumous work Walzer (1985),

In the first of these two writings, al-Fārābī attempts to show the substantial agreement between Plato and Aristotle, “the two sources of philosophy, the ones who grounded its principles and its first elements, and the ones who took philosophy to its ultimate consequences and ramifications”.³⁵⁰ In the contemporary philosophical debate, he observes, there are heated arguments over the creation of the world or its eternity, and there is the widespread opinion that Plato and Aristotle were in disagreement with each other about this and about other doctrines. Now, this idea can be propounded only for one of these two following reasons: either the contemporaries are completely wrong due to ignorance, or the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle are in disagreement only in appearance.³⁵¹ If philosophy is a science, in fact, there cannot be any real disagreement between its main experienced leaders. Al-Fārābī then goes on to enunciate a series of points concerning logic, physics, ethics and metaphysics, in which Aristotle and Plato’s opinions seem to be in strong opposition. Among these points, the question of the creation of the world versus its eternity is particularly loaded with consequences: does the world have an efficient cause or not? It is commonly said that according to Aristotle the world is eternal and that, on the contrary, according to Plato it was created.³⁵² Nevertheless, according to al-Fārābī, so impious a thesis cannot be ascribed to Aristotle. Careful exegesis is needed in order to explain this apparent disagreement: when in the *De Caelo* (A, 10–12) Aristotle denied a temporal beginning to the universe, he in no way wished to contradict Plato, but simply wished to deny that the universe was produced according to a sequence of parts, as happens, for example, in the growth of plants and animals.³⁵³ Since, in his treatises on physics and metaphysics, Aristotle defined time as the measure of the movement of the heavenly sphere, he had to conclude that time and the universe began to exist in the same non-temporal instant. Consequently, Aristotle does not deny that the universe comes out of a “creation of the Creator (*ibdā’ al-bārī*)—God be praised—all at once, in no time (*bi-lā zamān*)”.³⁵⁴

(reprint 1998). French trans.: Jaussen–Karam–Chlala, (1949); Sabri (1990); Spanish trans.: Alonso (1961), 337–388; (1962), 181–227; Cruz Hernández–Alonso (1995); Italian trans.: Campanini (2001²); German translation: Ferrari (2009).

³⁵⁰ Martini Bonadeo (2008), 37.4–5.

³⁵¹ Ibidem, 37. 8–13.

³⁵² Ibidem, 63. 1–3.

³⁵³ Ibidem, 64. 2–3.

³⁵⁴ Ibidem, 64. 5–6, 189–199; in my edition of the *Kitāb al-ġam’* I also discuss Rashed (2008), 19–58, who challenges al-Fārābī’s authorship on the base of the claim that al-Fārābī

In order to explain Aristotle according to Aristotle's own writings, al-Fārābī goes on to compare this exegesis of the *De Caelo* with further arguments in other treatises by Aristotle. Among them, the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* has a special place:³⁵⁵ in this work, according to al-Fārābī, Aristotle upholds the existence of a Creator, who created the universe out of nothing. So, while Plato in the *Timaeus* has explained that the generation of everything that begins to be comes necessarily from a

could not accept the theory of creation as *ibdā'* as it is stated in the *Kitāb al-ġam'*. According to Rashed (2008), 53–54, al-Fārābī endorses the rules of Aristotle's kinematics, implying that every movement is continuous: hence, *ibdā'* as a punctual action all at once is impossible. But al-Fārābī himself states in no less an uncontroversially genuine work as the *Mabādī' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* that divine creation is by no means a movement (*lā ḥaraka*: Walzer [1998] 92.9). Against the evidence, Rashed (2009), 43–82, in particular 78–82, affirms that according to al-Fārābī divine creation is indeed a movement. Compare the following statements. "Nor is it (i.e. the First Principle) in need, in order for the existence of something else to emanate from its existence, of anything other than its very essence, neither of a quality which would be in it *nor of a motion* through which it would acquire a state which it did not have before, nor of a tool apart from its essence" (al-Fārābī, *Mabādī' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* 92.8–10 Walzer, my emphasis); "C. Martini Bonadeo quotes these lines among other passages of my paper and interprets them as ascribing to al-Fārābī the idea that divine creation is a motion. Even if it is true that I endorse this view (i.e. that for al-Fārābī divine creation is motion) – with some qualifications, however, see next paragraph – my point here was essentially different. I was not assuming anything about a general claim made *positively* by al-Fārābī, but explaining the main tenets of his strategy of *refutation* against al-Kindī. In a nutshell, al-Fārābī's reply proceeds as follows: "(1) according to you creation (*ibdā'*) amounts to nothing else than a divine action all at once; but (2) every action is a motion; (3) every motion is continuous; (4) no continuum is punctual; (5) no action in no time is possible; (6) your concept of *ibdā'* is thus self-contradictory". In other words, the core of my argument did not bear on the fact that according to al-Fārābī, divine creation would be a motion, but rather that al-Kindī's *ibdā'*, which is nothing but a (Mosaic) act of creation all at once in no time, is taken by al-Fārābī to violate the rules of Aristotelian kinematics" Rashed (2009), 80, my emphasis. On the *Creatio ex nihilo* and its arguments in the *Harmony* cf. also Gleede (2012), 91–117; Janos (2012).

³⁵⁵ Martini Bonadeo (2008), 199–202. In the *Harmony* al-Fārābī quotes the pseudo-*Theology* and considers it as an authentic work by Aristotle, whereas elsewhere (for example in the *Philosophy of Aristotle*) he seems cautious in counting among Aristotle's metaphysical doctrines that of emanation, to which the contents of the pseudo-*Theology* are devoted. Druart (1987), 23–43, convincingly explains this apparent inconsistency and maintains that al-Fārābī made emanationist cosmology his own, even if he had doubts about the authenticity of the pseudo-*Theology*: he adopted the doctrine of emanation to fill up what he felt to be a lacuna in the Aristotelian description of book Λ of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* concerning the causal relationship between the Immobile Mover and the cosmos. Other scholars think that al-Fārābī did not believe in what he exposed in the *Harmony*; they solve the apparent inconsistency by considering this writing as a sort of exoteric work, in which the author only mentions an opinion commonly accepted, without sharing it: see, for example, Galston (1977), 13–32. For the *status questionis* on the contemporary debate initiated by the study by Leo Strauss (Strauss [1945], 357–393) on al-Fārābī's "non-Neoplatonism" and in particular on his use of Neoplatonic exegesis of Aristotle only as a technique to reconcile Aristotelian philosophy and Islamic monotheism and a critical review of this problem, which I completely agree with, see Vallat (2004), 85–128.

cause, Aristotle distinguishes the efficient cause, that is to say, the mover, from what is moved. In addition, in the *Theology*, he demonstrates that every multiplicity depends upon unity – otherwise we would have a regress *ad infinitum*, and he affirms that the True One communicates unity to all other things as grounds for their being.³⁵⁶ Aristotle

explains that all the parts of the universe have been generated by the creation of the Creator – may He be glorified and magnified – and that He is the efficient cause, the True One, and the Creator of everything, according to that what Plato explained in his books on Lordship, like the *Timaeus* and the *Ablīṭyā*³⁵⁷ and in other statements of his. Again, in the books of his *Metaphysics*,³⁵⁸ Aristotle ascends from necessary demonstrative premises until he makes evident the oneness of the Creator – may His majesty be magnified – in book *Lambda*.³⁵⁹

Hence, in the *Harmony*, al-Fārābī's account of Aristotle's doctrine of the First Principle merges the causalism and teleology of Aristotelian physics and cosmology with the doctrine of the Immobile Mover of the *Metaphysics* and the creationistic interpretation of the activity of the One of the Arabic Plotinus and Proclus. He maintains the full consistency of this theological doctrine – which in his eyes is Aristotle's – with Plato's.

The descriptions of the First Cause and the origin of all beings which we read in the first three sections of *The Principle of the Opinion of the People of the Excellent City* are also meaningful: they show a synthesis between the Aristotelian doctrine of the nature and features of the first Immobile Mover and the Neoplatonic participation of the derivative beings in the One. In the first section of this treatise al-Fārābī, describes the First Principle as “the first being (*al-mawǧūd al-awwal*) which is the cause of the existence of all the other existents”.³⁶⁰ This is already far removed from Aristotle: the Aristotelian First Principle is not the efficient cause of the existence of other things, but the immobile cause of the movement of the universe. Al-Fārābī claims that the First Principle is perfect and it has a perfect existence in act; he emphasizes the self-sufficiency of this principle and its creative power.³⁶¹ This amounts to a conflation of the Neoplatonic doctrine of the production of effects as a result

³⁵⁶ Martini Bonadeo (2008), 65. 7–14.

³⁵⁷ For *Ablīṭyā* cf. Martini Bonadeo (2008), 65.13, 202–203.

³⁵⁸ Litt. the *Letters*: as the *Metaphysics* is often called in the Arabic tradition: cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 251.25 Flügel; 312.11 Taǧaddud.

³⁵⁹ Martini Bonadeo (2008), 65.11–16.

³⁶⁰ Al-Fārābī, *Mabādi' āra' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila*, 56.1–2 Walzer.

³⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 56.2–58.1.

of the perfection of the First Principle together with the Aristotelian doctrine of the causality of what is in act. Al-Fārābī's First Principle is, like Aristotle's and Plotinus', completely immaterial; tracing back to the Neoplatonic model of the pseudo-*Theology*, al-Fārābī states that the First Principle is without any form and absolutely simple:³⁶² it is One.³⁶³ This recalls the Platonic distinction between principles and the things which take part in them, because al-Fārābī affirms that if there was another thing like the First Principle, the latter would not be perfect, since what is perfect in every rank is only one. Finally, the First Principle does not have contraries:³⁶⁴ otherwise the First Principle and its contrary would have a common substratum or a common genus, which is impossible.

Al-Fārābī had always maintained in the first section of this treatise, recalling *Metaph.* Λ 7 and 9, that the First Principle is in its substance, intellect in act, whose activity consists in the contemplation of its essence: in other words, it is the thought of thought (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072b 18–24; Λ 9, 1074b 33–35).³⁶⁵ It is all-knowing (*‘ālim*) and wise (*ḥakīm*);³⁶⁶ it is true (*ḥaqq*) and eternally living (*ḥayy*), and it has a pure intellectual life of bliss (*Metaph.* Λ 7, 1072b 25–30).³⁶⁷ From its activity of self-contemplation, because of an overabundance of being and perfection, a process of emanation (*fayḍ*) begins; due to this process, it causes everything to come into existence. He writes:

The First is that from which everything which exists comes into existence. It follows necessarily from the specific being of the First that all the other existents which do not come into existence through man's will and choice are brought into existence by the First in their various kinds of existence, some of which can be observed by sense-perception, whereas others become known by demonstration. The genesis of that which comes into existence from it takes place by way of an emanation (*fayḍ*).³⁶⁸

The process of emanation of all things from the First Principle does not involve any alteration: in causing the things to be, it does not aim for any perfection it might seem to lack,³⁶⁹ and it is neither subdivided nor

³⁶² Ibidem, 58.1–9.

³⁶³ Ibidem, 60.14–62.7.

³⁶⁴ Ibidem, 62.8–66.7.

³⁶⁵ Ibidem, 70.1–72.6.

³⁶⁶ Ibidem, 72.7–74.1.

³⁶⁷ Ibidem, 74.2–76.13.

³⁶⁸ Transl. Walzer: Ibidem, 88.10–15, 89.

³⁶⁹ Ibidem, 90.4–6; 11–16.

diminished; on the contrary, it remains a unique essence and substance,³⁷⁰ it does not lack anything and nor does it need anything.³⁷¹

Once again, in *The Principle of the Opinion of the People of the Excellent City* we find the synthesis created by al-Fārābī between the Aristotelian and the Neoplatonic account: the intellectual nature of the First Principle, One, First Intellect and its own activity, that is to say self-contemplation, is the cause of the production of all the beings which come to be by way of emanation and through participation in its unity.

ii. As noted earlier, a second feature characterized the activity of the Aristotelian circle in Baghdad, namely, its direct relationship with the Alexandrian Aristotelian tradition and, through the Alexandrian commentators, with the whole exegetical tradition of the Aristotelian corpus. Through the literary genre of the philosophical commentary, the Aristotelians of Baghdad tried to return to Aristotle's text itself. They seemed to be somehow aware of the fact that through the process of the Islamic tradition of *falsafa*, Aristotle risked becoming what Endress has called a *πρόσωπον*,³⁷² a mask behind which a series of Greek doctrines, not only Aristotelian, but also Platonic, Middle-Platonic and Neoplatonic have been superimposed. This mask had ensured the unity of the rational sciences in Islam under the aegis of philosophy. However, meticulous study of the Aristotelian texts, often accompanied by the commentaries, showed how far this Aristotle was from the True One. In some of the commentaries on Aristotle produced within the circle of Baghdad and inspired by the model of the Alexandrian commentaries we find a real attempt to go back to Aristotle.³⁷³ However, such an attitude did not enjoy particular relevance in the succeeding Islamic philosophical tradition, nor even within the Baghdad circle as we have seen in al-Fārābī.

This trend of rigorous Aristotelianism manifested itself by placing every single treatise in the framework of a more general discussion, and by following the pattern of the preliminary questions to the study of Aristotle faced by the Neoplatonic commentators,³⁷⁴ taking care to comment according to the order of the text, in a manner faithful to the methodological principle of explaining Aristotle according to Aristotle, whose authority had to be restored.

³⁷⁰ Ibidem, 92.3–7.

³⁷¹ Ibidem, 92.8–94.3.

³⁷² Endress (1997), 1–2.

³⁷³ Martini Bonadeo, (2003a), 69–96.

³⁷⁴ Cf. above note 78; besides Simplicius, *Commentaire sur les Catégories*, Hadot (1990) I. 21–47, 138–160; Mansfeld (1994), 10–21.

The first of these features emerges clearly from a paradigmatic text. It is the introduction to the *Commentary on the Categories* (*Tafsīr kitāb al-Maḳūlāt*)³⁷⁵ by Abū l-Faraḡ ibn al-Ṭayyib (m. 1043).³⁷⁶

The blessed Hippocrates held the view that the crafts arose and developed because an original creator transmits to a successor what he had created earlier. This successor examines it critically and adds to it as far as is possible for him. This process continues until the craft achieves perfection[...] In our studies we have followed in the footsteps of our predecessors and taken pains to understand their works well. We have also discovered, in connection with obscure statements and explanations of them, a number of ideas going beyond what they had said. Therefore, we would like to add our few statements to their numerous ones and gather all the material in one single commentary which would save the user the great trouble of having to consult the earlier commentaries. Since we love truth and prefer to use the method of the ancients, we must begin to do everything as they did. Before the study of Aristotle's *Categories* all commentators have occupied themselves regularly with the ten main principles which are of no little use to philosophy and necessarily belong to it. While philosophy itself is studied by them at the beginning of *Isagoge*, they are here occupied with something that necessarily belongs to it. This is done in order to underline the great importance of philosophy, so that we should not regard the instrument by which we study, as something irksome. The ten main principles are the following:

1. The number of philosophical schools and the etymology of the name of each school.
2. The division and the enumeration of Aristotle's works and the mention of their various purposes and the final aim that each of them serves.
3. Discussion of the starting-point for the study of philosophy.
4. Discussion of the method to be followed from beginning to end.
5. Discussion of the final aim to which philosophy brings us.
6. Discussion of the qualities of scholarship and character which a teacher of Aristotle's works should possess.
7. Discussion of the qualities of receptivity and character which a student of Aristotle's works should possess.
8. Discussion of the form of Aristotelian linguistic expression.

³⁷⁵ Ferrari (2006). Cf. Ferrari (2004), 85–106. Abū l-Faraḡ ibn al-Ṭayyib is credited also with a *Commentary on the Metaphysics* (al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 223.16–18 Lippert). According to a polemical tradition, which probably traces back to Avicenna (cf. Gutas [1988], 68–69), Ibn al-Ṭayyib had composed this commentary over twenty years. Some parts of this commentary, lost to us in Arabic, are preserved in the Hebrew ms. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, parmense 2613 (*olim* De Rossi 1308): cf. Zonta (2001a), 155–177.

³⁷⁶ Cf. Leclerc (1876), I. 486–488; Brockelmann (1943), I. 233, 653; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 884; Graf (1944–53), II. 160–176; Vernet (1986a), III. 995; Sezgin (1970), III.141–147.

9. Statement of the reason why he expressed himself obscurely in some of his arguments.
10. The number of the principles which one must bear in mind before every book.³⁷⁷

This text openly aims at placing the circle of Baghdad's reading of Aristotle within the whole Peripatetic tradition after Aristotle. This explains the reference to the predecessors (*Metaph. a* 1, 993b 11–19), the attempt to write a unique commentary, (which collects the fruits of all of the previous tradition and adds to these new ones), and the need to know the previous philosophical schools. Moreover, we find the idea of recognizing the authority of Aristotle by obtaining a full and clear knowledge of the structure of the *corpus* of his works, and even more by focusing on the aim of Aristotle's philosophical reflection.

The philological care used to obtain a reliable text to comment upon³⁷⁸ and the faithfulness to the principle of explaining Aristotle through Aristotle clearly appear in a crucial text of the Arabic tradition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics: the Commentary on Alpha Elatton* (*Tafsīr al-alif al-ṣuġrā min kutub Aristūṭālīs fī mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*)³⁷⁹ by the Christian teacher of the Baghdad circle mentioned above, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (893–974).³⁸⁰ In his commentary, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī reproduces in the lemmata Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn's translation of *Alpha Elatton*, systematically comparing them with other Syriac and Arabic translations. A clear example of this practice is given in his commentary on *Metaph. a* 2, 994a 11–19. Ishāq translates:

About the intermediates, which are the things that have a term prior to them and a posterior term, the prior must be the cause of the later terms.

³⁷⁷ Transl. Rosenthal (1975), 69–72. Cf. Abū l-Faraġ ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Tafsīr kitāb al-Maqūlāt*, ms Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, *Ḥikma* I, fol. I v, ed. by Ferrari (2006), 1.15–2.21.

³⁷⁸ Cf. Platti (1983), 27–29.

³⁷⁹ Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is mentioned by al-Qifī, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, 362.20 Lippert. The list of manuscripts is given by Endress (1977), 38–39. This commentary has been edited three times by Miškāt (1967) (for the manuscripts on which this edition is based on cf. Endress [1977], 39; by Badawī (1973) (for the manuscripts on which this edition is based on cf. *Introduction*, 18); by Khalifāt (1988), 220–262. Cf. Martini Bonadeo (2007a), 7–20, where I have pointed out that Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī had at his disposal a version of Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn's translation of *Alpha Elatton* more complete than the one preserved in the *Tafsīr* by Averroes; Martini Bonadeo, (2003a), 69–96, in particular 90–93; Martini Bonadeo (2007a), 14–20; see Adamson (2010), 343–374.

³⁸⁰ Cf. above 67–68; Platti (1983), from the examination of the Arabic bio-bibliographical works, the manuscripts Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ar. 2346 and Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, or. 583 gave a vivid a portrait of this Christian teacher, apologist, excellent translator and first rate philosopher; cf. Nasir Bin Omar, (1995), 167–181; Ramón Guerrero (2001), 639–649; Martini Bonadeo (2007a).

For if we were asked which of the three is the cause, we would say: the first. Surely the last is not their cause, for it is the cause of none; nor even the intermediate is cause of the three terms, for it is the cause only of one of them. It makes no difference whether there is one intermediate or more, nor whether they are infinite or finite in number, and the parts of the things which are infinite in this way, and all the infinite parts are intermediates in this way down to that now present. If nothing is first, necessarily there is no cause at all.³⁸¹

Ishāq's version faithfully translates the passage in which Aristotle states that when we are speaking about a finite series of intermediate elements, the prior element in the series must be the cause of the subsequent ones. For if we have to say which element is the cause, we should say the first; surely not the last, for the final term is the cause of none; nor even the intermediate, for it is the cause only of one. It makes no difference whether there is one intermediate or more. Now, let us imagine a series which is infinite: in this case, all the elements preceding the one we are considering at present are intermediates; consequently, if there is no first element, there is no cause at all. Yahyā ibn 'Adī has in front of him this literal translation which gives a correct understanding of these lines,³⁸² as we can see from the beginning of his commentary.³⁸³

His aim in this section is to clarify that causes precede by nature their effects and are prior to them, and that effects are posterior to causes. For him this fact makes it clear that if there is nothing which is first and which has nothing prior to it, there is no cause at all and, in this case, if there is no cause, there are no effects; but it is clear and evident that the effects exist. Therefore it is necessary that the causes exist and hence the first exists necessarily. And since the first exists, it is clear that causes exist before, and this is what Aristotle intended to demonstrate, and for this reason he added this explanation and said: "*About the intermediates, which are the things that have a term prior to them and a posterior term, the prior must be the cause of the later terms*". So it is clear that the intermediates have a prior and a last term, if they are exactly what is intermediate between two extremes; and in the same way it is also evident that the prior is, among these three terms, the cause of the other two which follow. For this reason he says: "*It is absolutely necessary that the prior is the cause of the later terms*". Then he says: "*When we ask which of the three is the cause*", we answer "*The first*"...

³⁸¹ Yahyā ibn 'Adī, *Tafsīr al-Alif al-Ṣuġrā min kutub Aristūṭālīs fī mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*, 36.1–12 Miškāt; 180.12–22 Badawī; 234.15–235.6 Khalifāt.

³⁸² Cf. Mattock (1989), 101–102; Martini Bonadeo (2002), 101–103.

³⁸³ Yahyā ibn 'Adī, *Tafsīr al-Alif al-Ṣuġrā min kutub Aristūṭālīs fī mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*, 36.13–38.10, 40.2–17 Miškāt; 181.1–13, 181.21–182.13 Badawī; 235.7–236.2, 236.10–237.9 Khalifāt.

Then he begins to add evidence to this theory by saying: “*Surely the last is not their cause, for it is the cause of none; nor even is the intermediate cause of the three terms, for it is the cause only of one of them*”. This is evident and he speaks clearly about it.

Afterwards he says: “*It makes no difference whether there is one intermediate or more, nor whether they are infinite or finite in number, and the parts of the things which are infinite in this way, and all the infinite parts are intermediates in this way down to that now present*”. It means that there is no difference concerning the fact that it is absolutely necessary that the prior is cause of the later terms, if the intermediate, between two extremes, is one, or the intermediates are more, and if they are finite in number or infinite. And he adds to his passage: “*and the parts of the things which are infinite in this way*”, in order to distinguish the intermediates between two extremes: whether some are only causes, some are only effects, and some others are causes and effects together, or whether they are only intermediates in a series, like the parts of the time, of speeches or of things such as those. And then he says: “*and all the infinite parts are intermediates in this way*”: which means that there is no difference between them, since they are intermediates, and his phrase “*down to that now present*” means that it finishes with the last that is only an effect”.

At this point Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī adds:³⁸⁴

It is necessary to know that in this part of the speech which in Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn’s translation begins “*It makes no difference whether there is one intermediate*” and finishes with “*down to that now present*” I have found in another ancient Arabic translation this quotation: “*It makes no difference whether the First Cause is one or more, nor whether the causes are finite or infinite in number, because all the parts of what is infinite are in this way, and all the parts of what is infinite are now intermediates in the same way*”.

In addition, I have found that the same quotation in Syriac goes like this: “*It makes no difference for one thing to say that the causes are one or more, nor to say that they are infinite or finite, and all the infinite parts and the parts of what is infinite in this way are intermediates down to that now present*”.

The commentator makes use of two additional translations: a Syriac version and an Arabic one – probably that of Uṣṭāt³⁸⁵ – which diverge from Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn’s version in particular in the rendering of *Metaph. a 2, 994a 16*, where Iṣḥāq translates Aristotle’s text correctly. In Iṣḥāq’s version, it says that it makes no difference whether there is one intermediate or more, nor whether they are infinite or finite in number; however, the

³⁸⁴ Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī, *Tafsīr al-Alif al-Ṣuḡrā min kutub Aristūṭālis fī mā ba’d al-ṭabī’a*, 42.1–9 Miškāt; 182.14–22 Badawī; 237.10–238.2 Khalifāt.

³⁸⁵ Cf. Martini Bonadeo (2007a), 18.

text as it stands does not mention causes, even less a First Cause. As an experienced reader of Aristotle, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī tries to make sense of these two different versions by explaining the concept of "cause".³⁸⁶

In fact, the philosopher has said only that it makes no difference whether the cause is one or many, because he understands by 'causes' not the prior cause – since it is cause of that which is between it and the last effect which is not cause at all; in addition, this cause is not at all an intermediate, because nothing is prior to it – but he understands by 'causes' the intermediates which are between the First Cause and the last effect. And his statement "*In this way they are intermediate*" means: "in the way in which, as much as an intermediate is close to the First Cause, it is the cause of the cause that comes after it".

Then Aristotle says: "*Necessarily if there is no first there is no cause at all*", because the status of the cause is to be prior to his effects, and if there is no first there is no cause at all.

Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's text counts as an example of the approach typical to the teachers of the Aristotelian circle of Baghdad: they were looking for the authentic and authoritative Aristotelian text, even if they no longer had access to the Greek sources. To this end they had recourse to the commentaries of the Imperial Age (Alexander) and Late Antiquity (the Neoplatonic commentaries of the Alexandrian tradition).³⁸⁷ Nevertheless, this "pure" Aristotelianism did not prevail over the Aristotle-mask on which the unity of knowledge in the Arab world was based.³⁸⁸

This is also particularly relevant in the case of the transmission of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. The metaphysical science, whose foundations were given by Aristotle's *Metaphysics* from the beginnings of *falsafa*, had by this time assimilated al-Kindī's theology and was ready to play the role of the universal science ascribed to it by al-Fārābī's philosophy. This notion of metaphysics is presupposed, as we will see in the next paragraph, by Avicenna.

³⁸⁶ Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, *Tafsīr al-Alif al-Ṣuḡrā min kutub Aristūṭālīs fi mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*, 42. 9–44.3 Miškāt; 182.23–183.7 Badawī; 238.2–11 Khalifāt.

³⁸⁷ On this point Adamson (2010), 10–11, notes that the "phrase by phrase" style of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's commentary suggest that he is imitating the Greek division of commentaries into *theōria*, or thematic overview, and a *lexis*, or detailed exposition.

³⁸⁸ This fact would be clear even for a purist reader of Aristotle like Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. According to Adamson (2010), 17–23, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī seems to fall somewhere between a reading of *Metaphysics* α as "an introduction to metaphysics alone, understood as theology or "divine science": the science of immaterial causes". I think that Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's commentary on *Metaphysics* α is not sufficient to establish what in Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's opinion is the nature of metaphysics, even if there is truth in Adamson's arguments.

4. *Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) and Metaphysics*

In 2006 A. Bertolacci published an important volume on the reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Avicenna and, in particular, in his *Kitāb al-Šifā'* where, after having discussed the Arabic tradition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* before Avicenna, he presents Avicenna's reshaping of the epistemological profile of *Metaphysics* – its subject-matter, structure, method and place in the system of sciences – and his recasting of its contents.³⁸⁹ This comprehensive and fascinating study releases me from the arduous task of presenting in detail Avicenna's reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In addition, it allows me to concentrate on two different aspects of Bertolacci's analysis which are of great significance in exploring the reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* after Avicenna and especially in 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī. These aspects are the role of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* according to al-Kindī and according to al-Fārābī in Avicenna's education and the structure and the doctrines of the metaphysical science in Avicenna.

4.1. *Aristotle's Metaphysics in Avicenna's Education*

The ingenious originality of Avicenna (980 ca.-1037) makes it very difficult to frame his thought in historiographical categories. A good point with which to begin are the years of Avicenna's education, which can give us an idea of which version of the *Metaphysics* he received. Bertolacci has tackled this problem on the basis of an accurate analysis of Avicenna's autobiography.³⁹⁰ The conclusions he reached are not far from the picture which I have tried to describe up to now of the tradition of the *Metaphysics* in *falsafa*: the alternation of two models of metaphysical science al-Kindī's and al-Fārābī's, one grafted on to the other.

In Avicenna's autobiography,³⁹¹ which portrays the events of his life from his birth to his first philosophical works, and informs us about his

³⁸⁹ Bertolacci (2006). More recently Lizzini (2012) has published a comprehensive study on Avicenna's philosophy, which has the merit of presenting Avicenna's metaphysics after an extensive and accurate description of his logical thinking and of his epistemology.

³⁹⁰ Bertolacci (2001), 257–295; Bertolacci (2006), 37–64.

³⁹¹ Avicenna's autobiography portrays the events of the philosopher's life from his birth until his encounter with his disciple Abū 'Ubayd 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Ġūzġānī (in 1014 ca.), who undertook the editing of the autobiography and after Avicenna's death added the account of the last years of his teacher's life. These two parts of the same textual unit have been called an autobiography/biography complex. We have at least two redactions of it: the first preserved in the *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'* by al-Qifī and in the *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'* by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a and the second is preserved in some manuscripts, from

educational training. First in logic, then in physics and metaphysics, the metaphysical science is mentioned twice. In the first passage, there is only a short reference; in the second passage, we find the anecdote which describes how Avicenna worked hard to understand Aristotle's *Metaphysics* until he had access to a treatise by al-Fārābī.

From an analysis of the first reference it is clear that, during his philosophical studies, Avicenna did not read Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in its entirety, but knew only some essential parts (*fuṣūṣ*) of it, namely, some parts of the books *Alpha Elatton* and *Lambda*, with some commentaries: the same books, which as we have seen, had played a fundamental role in the early reception of the Aristotelian treatise in *falsafa*. Only during a more advanced phase of his education had he at his disposal Aristotle's treatise in its entirety.

According to Bertolacci, there are two stages in Avicenna's knowledge of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Doctrinally, one may say that Avicenna passes from the study of Aristotelian theology (*'ilm ilāhī*) to the study of Aristotelian ontology (*'ilm kullī*).³⁹² Historically, this evolution in Avicenna seems to confirm the process of the tradition of the *Metaphysics* in the Islamic East described so far: Avicenna seems to shift from al-Kindī's theologizing reading of Greek metaphysics, best exemplified by Aristotle's text, to al-Fārābī's reading, according to which the metaphysical science is not only the theology of *Lambda*, but also the universal science and ontology.

The mention of metaphysics in Avicenna's autobiography is located between the description of his first acquaintance with jurisprudence, logic and mathematics, (namely, the first two curricular theoretical disciplines) and the account of the years that he later devoted to the study and practice of jurisprudence and medicine. Avicenna tells us that when his teacher of logic and mathematics Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Nātilī took leave of him, departing to Gurgānġ, he devoted himself on his own "determining of the validity of books (*kutub*; i.e. Aristotle's treatises and perhaps also the *Theology*), both essential parts (*fuṣūṣ*) and commentaries (*ṣurūḥ*),³⁹³ on natural philosophy and metaphysics (*ilāhiyyāt*)" and at that moment the "gates of knowledge" began to open for him.³⁹⁴ The most controversial

which W.E. Gohlman has chosen the manuscripts for his edition of the text (Gohlman [1974]; see the review of Ulmann [1975], 148–151). Besides, cf. Gutas [1988], 22–30; 149–198.

³⁹² Gutas (2000), 159–180, 167.

³⁹³ Gutas (1993), 33–35.

³⁹⁴ Gohlman (1974), 20.4–26.4. Cf. Bertolacci (2001), 260; Bertolacci (2006), 39–40.

aspect of this passage is the term *fuṣūṣ*: Bertolacci demonstrates that both for textual reasons,³⁹⁵ and for its typical use in Avicenna,³⁹⁶ this term cannot be translated as if it were *nusūṣ* (*texts*), as it has been traditionally interpreted and translated. He therefore translates the term *fuṣūṣ* as ‘essential parts’,³⁹⁷ mostly because the second mention of the *Metaphysics*, in the autobiographical account, seems to imply the idea that the first time Avicenna drew on the *Metaphysics* and the commentaries related to it, he accomplished a selective reading of it. Indeed, we read:

Having mastered logic, natural philosophy and mathematics, I had now reached metaphysics (*al-‘ilm al-ilāhī*). I read the *Metaphysics* (*Kitāb mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a*), but did not understand what it contained and was confused about the author’s purpose to the point that I reread it forty times and consequently memorized it. In spite of this, I still did not understand it or what was intended by it; and I said, despairing of myself: “There is no way to understand this book”. One afternoon I was at the booksellers’ quarter when a crier came up holding a volume which he was hawking for sale. He offered it to me but I refused in vexation, believing that there was no use in this particular science. But he said to me: “Buy it; its owner needs the money and it’s cheap; I’ll sell it to you for three dirhams”. So I bought it and it turned out to be Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī’s book *On the purposes of Metaphysics* (*Fī aḡrād kitāb mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a*).³⁹⁸ I returned home and hastened to read it, and at once the purposes of that book were disclosed to me because I had learned it by heart. I rejoiced at this and the next day I gave much in alms to the poor in gratitude to God Exalted.³⁹⁹

This passage testifies that only at that moment did Avicenna read the text of the *Metaphysics* in its entirety. In fact, he quotes it with the name *Kitāb Mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a*, always speaks of it as a book (*kitāb*), and says that he read, reread and memorized it. The fact that he encounters serious problems in the comprehension of its contents is better explained if we suppose that Avicenna was then accomplishing a detailed study of the treatise for the first time. Besides, as Gutas has observed, Avicenna realizes that his problem did not consist only in understanding the contents of the treatise, but in understanding what its aim was, which did not emerge clearly from the editing of all the books and its structure.⁴⁰⁰ We are left

³⁹⁵ Cf. Bertolacci (2001), 261–264; Bertolacci (2006), 40–43.

³⁹⁶ Bertolacci (2001), 263–264; 269–274; Bertolacci (2006), 46–50.

³⁹⁷ Bertolacci (2001), 264–265; Bertolacci (2006), 42–43.

³⁹⁸ Cf. above note 334.

³⁹⁹ Gohlman (1974), 30.7–34.4. English version of Bertolacci (2001), 267; Bertolacci (2006), 44.

⁴⁰⁰ Gutas (1988), 238–242.

with the question of what corresponds to the *fuṣūṣ* and the *ṣurūḥ* to which Avicenna devoted himself, as a *philosophus autodidactus*, at the beginning of his education in metaphysics.

The *fuṣūṣ* should have included at least the first two chapters of α and chapters 6–10 of book Λ , for three reasons. First of all, these parts of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* seem to have been the ones present in Avicenna's library, as is attested by the ms. Cairo, *Dār al-kutub Ḥikma* 6. This manuscript contains a short version of the first two chapters of the Arabic translation of book α , ascribed to Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (*Metaph.* α 1–2, 993a 30–994b 31), and a paraphrastic version of chapters 6–9 of book Λ (*Metaph.* Λ 6–9, 1071b 3–1076a 4). Secondly, this hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the quotations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Avicenna's writings: even if there are free reworkings of the Aristotelian treatise, in some cases Avicenna explicitly quotes Aristotle. This fact in any case allows us to identify those parts of the *Metaphysics* that Avicenna read for sure, without obviously ruling out his direct knowledge of other passages too.⁴⁰¹

In the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*,⁴⁰² for example, the explicit quotations of Aristotle are taken in their entirety from the second chapter of α and from chapters 7–8 of Λ .⁴⁰³ Finally, α in its entirety and the above-mentioned chapters of Λ seem to have had particular relevance for Avicenna not only in his main metaphysical work, the *Ilāhiyyāt*, but also in the commentaries devoted to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In particular, the one which belonged to the treatise *The Available and the Valid* (*Ḥāṣil wal-maḥṣūl*), following the testimony of a disciple of Avicenna, was devoted to α ;⁴⁰⁴ in the book *Fair Judgement* (*Kitāb al-inṣāf*), according to the *reportationes* of Avicenna's disciples, one can find the exegesis of chapters 6–10 of Λ .⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰¹ Bertolacci (2001), 275–276; Bertolacci (2006), 51–52.

⁴⁰² Ibn Sinā, *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, Madkour (1952–1983). Concerning the critical editions of the different sections of the Arabic texts and their translations see Janssens (1970–1989), 3–14; Janssens, (1990–1994), 1–9. The last section of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* (the *Cure*) is devoted to the *Metaphysics*; the edition of the Arabic text is: Ibn Sinā, *Al-Šifā'. Al-Ilāhiyyāt* (1) (*La Métaphysique*), Anawati–Zayed (1960); Ibn Sinā, *Al-Šifā'. Al-Ilāhiyyāt* (2) (*La Métaphysique*), Moussa–Dunya–Zayed (1960). We have four different integral translations of the *Ilāhiyyāt*. (1) The Latin medieval translation ascribed to *Dominicus Gundissalvi*; critical edition: Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, I–IV*, Van Riet (1977); Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, V–X*, Van Riet (1980); Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, I–X*, Lexiques, Van Riet, (1983). (2) The German translation Horten (1907), reprint (1960). (3) The French translation Anawati, (1978); Anawati (1985). (4) The Italian translations Lizzini–Porro (2002); Bertolacci (2007). The English translation Marmura (2005).

⁴⁰³ Bertolacci (2001), 277 and in particular notes 68 and 69.

⁴⁰⁴ Bertolacci (2001), 278; Bertolacci (2006), 52–53.

⁴⁰⁵ Bertolacci (2001), 271–274; Bertolacci (2006), 47–50.

In conclusion, the fact that these chapters of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* belonged to Avicenna's library, were quoted explicitly by Avicenna in his main metaphysical treatise and were so accurately commented upon as to impress his disciples shows the centrality of these chapters of books *Alpha Elatton* and Λ of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the education of Avicenna and in the subsequent development of his thought.

Concerning the commentaries (*šurūḥ*) used by Avicenna in his metaphysical education, the possibilities are limited to only two texts of the Greek tradition:⁴⁰⁶ Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on book Λ and Themistius' paraphrase of the same book. As far as Alexander of Aphrodisias is concerned, it is difficult to establish whether Avicenna had access to this commentary. But he was deeply influenced by another of Alexander's Arabic writings, the treatise, *On the Principles of the Universe* (*Fī mabādi' al-kull*),⁴⁰⁷ which in all likelihood was considered by Avicenna as a commentary on the doctrine of the Immobile Mover and the order of the universe of *Lambda*.⁴⁰⁸ The treatise *On the Principles of the Universe* seems to have been one of the *šurūḥ* of Avicenna's first metaphysical education. Themistius' paraphrase⁴⁰⁹ also seems to have been used by Avicenna and so must be collected among the *šurūḥ*. Among the different arguments used by Bertolacci to confirm this hypothesis, it is important to recall the fact that in the above-mentioned Cairo manuscript, containing the list of Avicenna's library and testifying to the *Kitāb al-Inṣāf*, we find, in an abridged form, Themistius' paraphrase of chapters 6–10 of Λ . Themistius' paraphrase is mentioned here as *šarḥ*, commentary. Besides, in the *Ilāhiyyāt* and in Avicenna's commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Themistius' paraphrase is the only commentary of the Greek tradition quoted explicitly and implicitly.⁴¹⁰

One can infer from all this that at the beginning of his metaphysical studies Avicenna read the *Metaphysics* selectively and studied its "essential parts", i.e. the first two chapters of α and the chapters 6–10 of Λ , with some commentaries. The doctrines of α and in particular the doctrine of the impossibility of going back *ad infinitum* in the chain of causes became, as it appears in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, the introduction to the treatment of the

⁴⁰⁶ Cf. Al-Fārābī, *Fī agrād al-ḥakīm fī kull maqāla min al-kitāb al-mawsūm bi-al-Ḥurūf*, Dieterici (1892), 34.14–15. Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 251.25–30 Flügel; 312.11–20 Tağaddud.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. above note 302.

⁴⁰⁸ Bertolacci (2001), 280–281; Bertolacci (2006), 54–55.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. above note 282.

⁴¹⁰ Bertolacci (2001), 282–283 and, in particular, notes 82, 83, 84, 85; Bertolacci (2006), 55–57.

First Principle in Λ , to the arguments providing its existence, and to the procession of the universe from it.⁴¹¹ Avicenna's reading of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was at that time a theologizing one in which the "ontological" books were neglected. This lecture followed in the footsteps of the interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* inaugurated by al-Kindī in his *On First Philosophy*, where, as we saw before, the doctrines of α on the causes introduced an analysis of the First Principle.⁴¹²

Only later did Avicenna tackle the text of the *Metaphysics* in its entirety. His difficulty was due not only to the discovery that Aristotle's text contains much more than a theological doctrine, but also to the discovery that books *Alpha Elatton* and *Lambda*, which he had read as contiguous to one another, were only the beginning and the end of a much wider doctrinal complex, which had to be explained. Reading al-Fārābī's *The Aims of Metaphysics* amounted to understanding Aristotelian ontology: the matter at hand was no longer the study of the First Principle of being *qua* being, because this study had to be preceded by one of the characters of being *qua* being (*Ilāhiyyāt*, II–V). Metaphysics as First Philosophy became in Avicenna's eyes the demonstrative science, having as its object being *qua* being.⁴¹³ In defining metaphysics in this way, in the few years of his education, Avicenna followed in the footsteps of the Arabic tradition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the Muslim East from the time of the first translations. The project of the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* itself was born from a progressively acquired awareness of the epistemological status of the metaphysical science – here Avicenna promises to solve the antinomies which had accompanied the metaphysical thought of *falsafa* – the antinomy between the eternity of God and the creation, between the transcendence and the immanence of universals, and between providence and the existence of evil.⁴¹⁴

4.2. *Structure and Doctrine of the Metaphysical Science in Avicenna*

The *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Šifā'* begins with the search for the subject (*mawḏū'*) of metaphysics as a science,⁴¹⁵ which in Avicenna's opinion, following his

⁴¹¹ Cf. Janssens (1997), 455–477.

⁴¹² Cf. above 40–45; Bertolacci (2001), 288–293; Bertolacci (2006), 58–63.

⁴¹³ Endress (1990), 30–35; Bertolacci (2005), 287–305; Bertolacci (2006), 66–103; Bertolacci (2007), 61–97.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Michot (2005), 327–340, in particular 338 on the following process of "self de-farabization" through which Avicenna went "in order to become really himself".

⁴¹⁵ Cf. Fakhry (1984), 137–147; Roccaro (1994), 69–82; Ramón Guerrero, (1996), 59–75; Cruz Hernández (2002), 47–56.

re-elaboration of the epistemology of the *Posterior Analytics*,⁴¹⁶ is different from the objects to be investigated (*maṭālib*). Every science has something as its subject, some object to investigate and some principle on which its demonstrations are based.

The objects of metaphysical science are the things which are separate from matter both in their subsistence and in their definition, the first causes of the natural and mathematical being, the cause of causes (*musabbib al-asbāb*) and the principle of principles (*mabda' al-mabādī'*), namely, God.⁴¹⁷ The first causes are the perfection of metaphysics,⁴¹⁸ the Cause of causes is its ultimate goal (*al-ġaraḍ al-aqṣā*),⁴¹⁹ its aim (*ġāya*),⁴²⁰ its perfection (*kamāl*), its noblest part (*ašraf aġzā'*) and its first purpose (*al-maqṣūd al-awwal*).⁴²¹ The true subject (*bi-l-ḥaqīqa*) of metaphysical science is the existent *qua* existent (*al-mawġūd bi-mā huwa mawġūd*).⁴²²

The objects of metaphysical science have to be demonstrated, and the subject of metaphysical science is the thing that every object of the same science shares with the other objects, but that, as a subject, cannot be investigated as it is.⁴²³ In fact, the subject is given, but we can investigate only the states of it.

Concerning the structure of the metaphysical science, in the prologue of the *Šifā'*, Avicenna claims that in his *summa* of the different fields of knowledge one can find everything the ancients wrote in their books, but in some cases arranged following a “more appropriate” order of exposition. Then he goes on to say that the reader can also find in the *Šifā'* his own reflection, especially in the fields of natural philosophy and metaphysics. Finally, he focuses on the fact that other structural changes are due to the transposition of a theme from one discipline to another.⁴²⁴ Predictably, the structure of the metaphysical science, described first in the *Ilāhiyyāt* I.2, reflects these preliminary intentions. As we can read, it is divided into three parts:

⁴¹⁶ *An. Post.*, I.10,76b 11–22; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Šifā'*, *al-Manṭiq*. 5. *al-Burhān*, 155. 4–12 'Afīfī. Cf. Bell (2004).

⁴¹⁷ *Ilāhiyyāt*, I.1, 4.14–17 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibidem*, I.1, 9.10 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibidem*, I.3, 19. 5–6 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴²⁰ *Ibidem*, I.3, 23.5 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴²¹ *Ibidem*, I.3, 23.6–8 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴²² *Ibidem*, I.2, 10.4–13.19 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴²³ *Ibidem*, I.1, 5.18–6.1 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴²⁴ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Šifā'*, *al-Manṭiq*. 1. *al-Madḥal*, 9.17–10.7 El-Khodeiri-El-Ehwani-Anawati. Cf. Gutas (1988), 51, 110–112.

One is that part which investigates the ultimate causes, since they are the causes of every caused existent with regard to its existence, and it investigates the First Cause from which emanates every caused 'existent' *qua* caused 'existent' – not *qua* existent in motion only or possessed of quantity only.

Another is that part which investigates the accidents of 'existent'.

Another is that part which investigates the principles of the particular sciences. Since the principles of each science which is more specific are questions which are discussed in the science that is more general, as the principles of medicine in natural science and of geodesy in geometry, it occurs that the principles of the particular sciences, which investigate the states of the particular aspects of 'existent', become clear in this science. Thus this science investigates the states of 'existent' and what resembles its divisions and species until it reaches a stage which specifies such divisions and species at which point the subject-matter of natural science comes about – then this science delivers the subject-matter to the natural science – and a stage which specifies such divisions and species at which the subject-matter of mathematics comes about – then this science delivers the subject-matter to mathematics – and similarly in the other cases. Of what precedes that specification and is as its principle, on the contrary, this science investigates and determines the state.

On that account, some investigations into this science regard the causes of caused 'existent' *qua* caused 'existent', some others, the accidents of 'existent', and yet others, the principles of the particular sciences.⁴²⁵

Then Avicenna goes on to say that this is the science we are looking for. It is First Philosophy, because it is the science of the first things in existence, that is to say, the First Cause and the first things in universality, i.e. being and unity. It is also wisdom, which is the most excellent science of the most excellent object to know. It is, in fact, the most excellent science, that is to say, the science of the most excellent objects to know, i.e. God and the ultimate causes of everything. The definition of Divine Science belongs to this science, which is the science of the things that are separate from matter, both in definition and in existence.⁴²⁶

In Avicenna's tripartite division of the structure of metaphysical science, the first part investigates the ultimate causes of every caused 'existent', which Avicenna had previously identified with Aristotle's four causes,⁴²⁷ and the First Cause from which everything emanates, namely the First Principle, God. This part of the metaphysical science is devoted

⁴²⁵ *Ilāhīyyāt*, I.2, 14.14–15.8 Anawati–Zayed. English translation of Bertolacci (2002), 1–69, in particular 5, partially revised; Bertolacci (2006), 149–211, in particular 153–154.

⁴²⁶ *Ilāhīyyāt*, I.2, 15.8–14 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴²⁷ *Ilāhīyyāt*, I.1, 7.8 Anawati–Zayed.

to aetiology and theology and includes the topics of Aristotle's *Metaphysics Alpha Elatton* and *Lambda*, which Avicenna met at the very beginning of his metaphysical education. In other writings, his description of this part of metaphysics is sharply characterized as theological. For instance, in the *Kitāb al-mabda' wa-l-ma'ād* (*Book of the Beginning and the End*), this part of metaphysics is called *utūlūǧīyā* (theology) and considers God's sovereignty (*rubūbiyya*), the First Principle, and the production of the universe: the impression is that the source of such a theology is not Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, but the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* and the *Liber de Causis*.⁴²⁸ In the *Risāla fī aqsām al-'ulūm al-'aqliyya* (*Treatise on the Division of the Intellectual Sciences*), which is devoted to the classification of sciences, the part of the metaphysical science which is called theology investigates the essence of the True One, Lord of the worlds.⁴²⁹

The second part of metaphysical science inquiries into the proper accidents or the accidents (*'awāriḍ*) of 'existent'. What does Avicenna mean here? In the previous pages of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, Avicenna pointed out that there are some notions that are common to the particular sciences even if they are not investigated by these sciences. These are the one *qua* one, the many *qua* many, the coincident, different, and contrary,⁴³⁰ the potency, act, and universal, the particular, the possible, and the necessary. These notions, related to the 'existent' *qua* 'existent' insofar it is existent *simpliciter*, are the proper accidents of the 'existent' *qua* 'existent'.⁴³¹ In addition, Avicenna includes in this list the notion of principle which is something that occurs to the 'existent' *qua* 'existent'.⁴³²

Finally, in Avicenna's opinion, the third part consists in an investigation of the principles of the particular sciences, and more precisely in an investigation of the states (*aḥwāl*) of the 'existent', its divisions (*aqsām*) and species (*anwā'*), passing from the more universal to the more particular, in order to reach the subject-matter of the particular sciences, i.e. natural philosophy, mathematics and logic. Avicenna identifies the states, divisions and species of 'existent' with Aristotle's categories, among which he focuses on substance and quality.⁴³³

⁴²⁸ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Mabda' wa al-ma'ād*, (1984) 1.8–9 Nūrānī.

⁴²⁹ Ibn Sīnā, *Risāla fī aqsām al-'ulūm al-'aqliyya*, in *Tis' rasā'il fī al-ḥikma wa-l-ṭabī'iyyāt*, 225–243 and in particular 227.10–229.14 'Āṣī. For the description of the structure of the metaphysical science in the other Avicenna's works, not only in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, see Bertolacci (2002), 34–44; Bertolacci (2006), 159–162, 180–189.

⁴³⁰ *Ilāhiyyāt*, I.2, 12.16–13.7 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴³¹ *Ibidem*, I.2, 13.12–13, 13.16–19 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴³² *Ibidem*, I.2, 14.5–7 Anawati–Zayed.

⁴³³ *Ibidem*, I.2, 12.11–14 Anawati–Zayed.

It is worth noting that according to Avicenna this tripartite division of metaphysics does not reflect the order of human knowledge – as, for example, in al-Fārābī's division of the same science⁴³⁴ – but it corresponds rather to the degree of importance of the things investigated in each section.⁴³⁵ It is in fact corroborated by the last passages of the text where Avicenna gives the proper definitions of this science. The metaphysical science, in that it studies of the First Cause is First Philosophy, in that it studies the most excellent object that can be known, i.e. God, is wisdom; the definition of Divine Science is proper to it.

In the *Ilāhiyyāt* I.4, devoted to describing the contents of the book, Avicenna gives us a different portrait of the metaphysical science. It consists of two different parts: the first is essentially characterized as the universal science which studies the categories, the species, the properties and the accidents of the 'existent' (in the previous text respectively parts 3 and 2) and their contraries, the one and the many (in the previous text it was only one of the properties of the 'existent', here a distinct part of metaphysics), number, its relation with 'existent', and the false opinions regarding it, in order to refute them.⁴³⁶ Then Theology follows. Theology studies the principle of existents, the First One, the Real, the Knowing, the Omnipotent Principle, Peace, Pure Good, Beloved in Itself; it refutes the wrong opinions about the principle of existents; and it describes the production of the universe from the angelic intellectual substances to man.

The crucial treatises and chapters of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (II.1-X.3) – which follow the introduction and precede a sort of appendix dealing with practical philosophy – in turn follow a third arrangement of the metaphysical science, which counts as a synthesis of the first two. Once more we find the tripartite division of the *Ilāhiyyāt* I.2, but in reverse order, and attention is paid, as in the *Ilāhiyyāt* I.4, to the notions of one and many which here share the same treatment reserved to the 'existant' and are discussed on their own. According to the division proposed by A. Bertolacci, sections II.1-X.3 fall into three parts. The first contains a discourse on the species of 'existent' and of the one and many, and some related topics. The second contains a treatment of the properties of the 'existent': anteriority, posteriority, potency, actuality, being perfect, being imperfect, whole, part, universal, particular, cause, and caused. The third section is devoted to theology: the First Principle, the proof of his existence, his attributes, his

⁴³⁴ Cf. above 61–64.

⁴³⁵ Bertolacci (2002), 9; Bertolacci (2006), 155.

⁴³⁶ See the detailed description in Bertolacci (2002), 17–20; Bertolacci (2006), 162–165.

nature, the progression of things from the First Principle and their return to it, and prophetology.⁴³⁷

The sources of such a tripartite division of the metaphysical science are Aristotle's *Metaphysics* books Γ 1–2 – in which Aristotle applies to being *qua* being the distinction between species and properties and analyses the co-implication and the convertibility of the concepts of being and unity – and E 1 – in which he announces his investigation of the ultimate causes of being. As A. Bertolacci has shown, Γ and E were considered by Avicenna as the first books of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. We have seen in the previous paragraph that Avicenna read book α as an introduction to the theology of Λ . In addition, it is difficult to know whether Avicenna read A, and in the affirmative case whether he knew it directly or indirectly.⁴³⁸ Book B was completely re-organized by Avicenna because he preferred to introduce the aporia where he believed to find its solution.⁴³⁹ Book Δ , too, was not treated as an independent unit. So Γ and E played the role of the opening books of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*⁴⁴⁰ and, in particular, Γ helped in the definition of the scientific status of metaphysics as a science⁴⁴¹ (now uniformed to the epistemology of the *Posterior Analytics*) and explained that as science of being *qua* being it is first of all ontology.

But if Aristotle was the ultimate source for Avicenna's reflection on the structure of the metaphysical science, some of the ideas shaped in Γ 1–2, which were greatly developed by Avicenna, were inherited *in nuce* from al-Fārābī, as we have seen in the previous paragraphs: first of all, the importance of ontology as the first part of metaphysics and the idea of metaphysics as universal science as it is the study of being *qua* being and of what is common to all existents. It is well-known that al-Fārābī's *The Aims of Metaphysics*⁴⁴² was decisive for Avicenna's understanding of the *Metaphysics*. From al-Fārābī, Avicenna derived his idea that the metaphysical science must investigate what is common to all existents, i.e. existence and oneness and also their opposites, their species, their properties, and their causes. However, even if the structure of the *Metaphysics* is thus described in its purposes, the order of al-Fārābī's exposition of the contents of Aristotle's treatise book after book does not follow al-Fārābī's

⁴³⁷ Bertolacci (2002), 20–34; Bertolacci (2006), 165–180.

⁴³⁸ Bertolacci (1999), 205–231; Bertolacci (2005), 260–263; Bertolacci (2006), 22–24.

⁴³⁹ Bertolacci (2004a), 238–64; Bertolacci (2006), 403–440.

⁴⁴⁰ Bertolacci (2004), 173–210; Bertolacci (2006), 375–401.

⁴⁴¹ For the relationship of this reading of the *Metaphysics* and Avicenna's reading of *Posterior Analytics* see Bertolacci (2004), 173–210; Bertolacci (2006), 375–401.

⁴⁴² Cf. above note 319.

own agenda. The contrary is true in the case of Avicenna. Avicenna was the first to reshape the books of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and for this reason Bertolacci raises him to the rank of a second editor of this treatise, after Andronicus of Rhodes.⁴⁴³

After having clarified the structure of metaphysics as a science and the contents of its first part, we need to explore in more detail its last part, i.e. theology which, as we have seen, concerns the First Principle, the proof of his existence, his attributes, his nature, the procession of things from the First Principle and their return to it, and prophetology. Linked to an Aristotelian ontology is a theology completely formed from the Neoplatonic doctrine of the One and the emanation of everything from it. And the link in this chain lies in Avicenna's reading of the causality of the First Principle of *Metaphysics Lambda*.⁴⁴⁴

The causality⁴⁴⁵ of the Immobile Mover as an ἀρχή combining Aristotle's four causes and Plato's causality is as crucial in Avicenna as in the rest of *falsafa*. This kind of interpretation was in all likelihood due to the Greek exegeses of *Lambda* which circulated in Arabic, and, in particular, to the Arabic Alexander's treatise, *On the Principles of the Universe (Fī mabādī' al-kull)*⁴⁴⁶ and to Arabic Themistius' paraphrase.⁴⁴⁷ As we have just seen, these texts were used by Avicenna in his metaphysical education.

This is not the place for a lengthy analysis of these texts, but it is worth noting that in both of them it is possible to distinguish the different elements of Greek Aristotelian and Platonic tradition, which, fused together, gave rise to the description of the Immobile Mover-First Cause elaborated by the *falāsifa* and, especially, by Avicenna. The treatise, *On the Principles of the Universe*, expresses in detail Alexander's doctrine by which the final cause must be intended as a substance subsistent in itself which moves the heavens as an object of desire: the first heaven wants to assimilate and uniform itself as much as possible to the Immobile Mover ('*alā ḡihati l-tašabbuhi bi-*').⁴⁴⁸ After the description of the way in which all the existents relate to this principle, defined as "that which everything desires", there follows a passage which is devoted to explaining the nature of the First Cause.

⁴⁴³ Bertolacci (2002), 62–67. Bertolacci (2004), 197–203 and table 4.

⁴⁴⁴ Martini Bonadeo (2004), 209–243.

⁴⁴⁵ On Avicenna's doctrines about causality see: Marmura (1981), 65–83; Marmura (1984), 172–187; Wisnovsky (2002), 97–123; Wisnovsky (2003), 49–68; Bertolacci (2002a), 125–154.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. above note 281.

⁴⁴⁷ Cf. above note 97.

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. Averroes, *Tafsīr mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*, Bouyges VII.1605,5–1607,2.

For all things existing by nature have in the very nature appropriate to them an impulse towards the thing which is the First Cause and what is better than all things, since nature and all things existing by it do what they do according to the nature proper to them out of desire to imitate that thing from which they are generated primarily. Each one of them achieves what it does according to its ability because of the perfection proper to itself in its very nature; thus, the natural body, which is prior to all natural bodies, has a natural impulse to imitate the First Cause. The aim of the act existing in the nature proper to it, namely the circular motion with which the <heavenly> body moves eternally insofar as it can, is an imitation of the substance which is not a body and not moving; the continuity of the motion appropriate to it is an assimilation (*tašabbuhu bi-*) to the eternity of that <First Cause> insofar as it is unmoved. The mover of the spherical body which the latter desires must therefore be that thing which is truly supreme in goodness and the best. Since it is in that state, it must be more exalted and nobler than all living beings and divine bodies. For that which is the cause, for all things, of such perfection as exists in them, which is proper to them in nature, is more deserving of <being defined by> exaltedness and nobleness. The cause of motion of the divine body must be its impulse towards the thing which is supremely generous: it turns to it and follows it.⁴⁴⁹

This passage explains how the divine power permeates the whole universe through a universal natural impulse that is direct to the First Principle. The First Cause, the highest degree of goodness, the highest and the noblest of all living beings (heavenly bodies included), produces in the first sphere the desire for imitation. The features of this First Cause recall those of a paradigmatic cause which, insofar as it is perfect good, generates a desire for imitation.⁴⁵⁰ The divine body desires the Immobile Mover and tries to imitate it by reproducing, as far as possible, its immobility. The causality of the Immobile Mover of *Metaphysics Lambda* is defined both as a final and a paradigmatic combining of elements from different Greek traditions.

Moreover, in Themistius' paraphrase, the Immobile Mover, i.e. the First Cause, is simple and actual substance in which being and being one are the same. The nature of the First Cause is not only that of mover, but also that of final cause and perfection, that is to say, of formal or paradigmatic cause, insofar as this perfection consists in being a thing chosen for itself, being beauty in itself, being the highest principle. In the Arabic Themistius, the Immobile Mover, insofar as it is the First Cause of all things, combines

⁴⁴⁹ Cf. Genequand (2001), 54.7–56.9, 55–57.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibidem, 94.16–96.6.

some elements of Aristotelian causality and some elements of Platonic and Neoplatonic causality.⁴⁵¹

This nature is not only the prime mover for the other things, but it is the perfection and the final cause. In fact, the thing which is chosen for itself, which is beauty in itself and highest of degrees in itself, is also the principle and perfection in itself.

It is intellect and prime truth in the highest degree. Every act which is from the intellect is knowledge. We say that the act of intellect is substance and it is necessary that the substance of the First Cause is science. From it the hierarchy of the existent things and their structure comes, towards it desire tends. And of that which comes after it, a part is near and a part is far, like what happens in the rule of cities. In fact, a part of the citizens is near to perfection, while a part is distant from it. This is not amazing if a First Cause, which is substance and act, is posited to exist. Its intelligence is in itself, and all other things desire to follow the path of this intellect in the order of the existent things and their hierarchical position.

The First Cause moves in a similar manner to the way that an object of desire moves. The very first thing which moves due to the First Cause, comes near to it, desires it, and tries to assimilate and conform itself to this First Cause (*al-tašabbuhu bi-*). This first thing is none other than the first heaven and the sphere of the fixed stars to its proximity. The first heaven finds benefit from its proper order which it desires as much as possible, like the person who finds benefit in the position of a ruler because he is near to the first thing, not locally, but by nature.⁴⁵²

By stating that the First Cause is intellect, truth and science, Themistius introduces the crucial questions which he will face in his exegesis of *Metaph.*, Λ 9: God's knowledge of the individual realities and the doctrine whereby God is the *Nomos* of the world. If in Aristotle the First Principle, having itself as the unique object of its intellectual act (*Metaph.*, Λ 9, 1074b 33–1075a 10), ignores the world, in Themistius, God, like Plotinus' νοῦς, knows what is different from Himself without going outside of Himself. Indeed, He contains the ideas of all things and so knows every knowable (This central aspect of the Islamic God will be particularly important in Avicenna, too). Therefore, Themistius describes the relationship between God and the world by saying that God is the Law and the order of the world, and He is its condition of intelligibility.

The way in which Themistius describes the First Cause is closely related to Alexander's doctrine of the heavenly motion, which moves due to the

⁴⁵¹ Pines (1987), 185–188.

⁴⁵² Badawī (1947), 15.15–16.5. The English translation is mine. The Arabic text of Themistius' paraphrase is very brief if it is compared with its Hebrew version. See the synoptic translation in Brague (1999).

desire to imitate the immobility of the First Cause. The First Cause moves as desire moves, and the first heaven, which moves due to the First Cause, tries to become closer to the First Cause, desires the First Cause and tries to assimilate and conform itself to the First Cause because it is by nature close to the First Cause. The term used by the Arabic Themistius, *al-tašabbuhu bi-*, is the same as that used by Alexander.

In the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* we find the most detailed presentation of Avicenna's conception of the causality of the First Principle. In the sixth treatise, he defines the agent cause as the cause able to give effect to being, because in metaphysics, according to Avicenna, the agent does not mean only principle of movement, as in physics, but principle of being. This is exactly what the creator of the world (*al-bārī li-l-'ālam*) is.⁴⁵³ Then the eighth treatise, begins with a demonstration of the unity of the First Principle in the series of the agent causes and concludes with the existence of an absolute and One First Principle, Creator of the universe, which is the perfective cause (*al-'illa al-tamāmiyya*), the Good⁴⁵⁴ and the *Necesse Esse* (*al-wāğib al-wuğūd*) from which other things receive their being (although their matter or their form do not precede their existence). Contingency characterizes every creature, whose being is caused (*mubda'*), in so far as the possible being becomes necessary in creatures when they are caused by the First Cause: the possible being is the essence or the quiddity (*māhiyya*) of every creature. Only in the case of the First Principle does quiddity coincide with being and being existent: its definition is *necessitas essendi*, the necessity is the First Principle.⁴⁵⁵ The other attributes which we use in the description of this principle, as for example

⁴⁵³ *Ilāhiyyāt*, VI.1, 257.13–16 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, VIII.3, 340.8–341.4 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed; VIII. 6, 355.1–356.5 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, I.6, 37.7–10 Anawati–Zayed; VIII.3, 342.8–343.6 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed; VIII.4, 344. 11–13 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed. On the distinction between essence and existence see Goichon (1937); Morewedge (1972), 425–435; Jolivet (1984), 19–28; Rizvi (2000), 61–108; Lizzini (2003), 11–138. On the sources which influenced Avicenna's elaboration of this doctrine, there are different opinions: for Booth (1983), 107–126, Avicenna found the idea of the universality of essence and the particularity of existence directly in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This opinion is shared by Burrell (1986), 53–66. According to Wisnovsky (2003a), 145–180, the source is al-Fārābī's distinction between existent and thing. Moreover, other scholars have recognized in Avicenna the deep influence of the Arabic Neoplatonic tradition: the Arabic Plotinus, the *Liber de causis* and al-Kindī share the idea of one absolute simple being which is pure being (*anniyya mahda*) or only being (*anniyya faqat*). Cf. Adamson (2002), 297–312. Finally the discussion of Islamic theology and its different schools on the relation between thing and existent also exerted a deep influence on Avicenna: see, on this point, Jolivet (1984); Marmura (1991–92), 172–206; Wisnovsky (2003a), 145–160.

unity and omniscience, do not produce in it any multiplicity: they simply express the relation between the First Principle and the caused existents or, to put it in Neoplatonic and Kindian terms,⁴⁵⁶ they are denied of this principle because they are incompatible with its perfection. The First Principle does not have any quiddity *nisi anitatem* (*inniyya* or *anniyya*)⁴⁵⁷ *quae sit discreta ad ipsa*.⁴⁵⁸

Then, in the ninth treatise, Avicenna explores the relation between this First Principle and the universe which is produced by it through emanation. In this context the second section of this treatise is devoted to Avicenna's interpretation of the motion of the heavens and the causality of the Immobile Mover-First Cause in relation to the movement of the heavenly spheres. According to Avicenna, the heavenly sphere is moved by its soul:

If things are in this way, the heavenly sphere moves by means of the soul and the soul is the proximate principle of the motion of the heavenly sphere (...); it is the perfection of the body of the sphere and its form. If this was not the case, and it was in itself subsistent in every aspect, it would be a pure intellect which neither changes nor passes [from one point to another] and to which something potential could not join.⁴⁵⁹

But the First Mover of the heavenly sphere is an immaterial power which moves as an object of love.

Before the proximate motion of the sphere, even if it is not an intellect, it is necessary that there be an intellect as prior cause of the motion of the sphere (...). The First Mover is an absolute immaterial power. Since, insofar as it produces motion, it is absolutely impossible that it is in motion – in that case, as it is clear, it will change and become material– it is necessary that it moves as a mover moves by means of the intermediate of another mover: this other mover tries to produce the motion, desires the motion and changes because of it; this is the way in which the mover of mover moves. The ability to move what it moves without change by virtue of an intention or a desire is the aim and the goal towards which the mover tends: it is the object of love, and the object of love, insofar as it is beloved, is the good of the lover (...).⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁶ *Ilāhīyyāt*, VIII.5, 354.11–13 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed *versus* al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, 160.15–20 Abū Rīda; see the translation above note 287.

⁴⁵⁷ *Liber de causis*, prop. 8, 78.8–79.4 Bardenhewer; Alonso (1958), 311–346.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ilāhīyyāt*, VIII.4, 344.10 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, IX.2, 386.14–387.1 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed, my translation. Cf. Marmura (2005), 311.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, IX.2, 387. 1–11 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed, my translation. Cf. Marmura (2005) 311–312.

In Avicenna too, as well, who clearly depends in these passages on the Arabic Alexander and the Arabic Neoplatonic tradition,⁴⁶¹ the Immobile Mover is the final cause which moves without being moved, as an object of love. The object of love is an object of desire because it is the good for

⁴⁶¹ According to Wisnovsky, by the time Avicenna was composing his first philosophical treatises, the ancient way of interpreting Aristotle's works, that associated with Alexander, had been superseded by a new method, one associated with Ammonius, Asclepius and John Philoponus. In their school in Alexandria, the fusion of the two hermeneutical projects – the Platonic and the Aristotelian – was born and had been going on for five hundred years before Avicenna was born. In Wisnovsky's opinion, the history of the commentators' work on Aristotle must be interpreted as follows. Aristotle's *corpus* of works is not always consistent on fundamental issues like the causality of the Immobile Mover. The first commentators on Aristotle, such as Alexander, played a crucial role in constructing a coherent Aristotelian doctrine out of the sometimes incompatible assertions found in Aristotle's treatises (the project of the so-called "lesser harmony"). The later commentators, following the teaching of Porphyry and Proclus, were engaged in a different and more ambitious harmonization project: the "greater harmony" between Aristotle and Plato. Ammonius was the proponent of the synthesis between the two harmonies: "this meant composing commentaries on Aristotle's treatises in such a way that those passages in which Aristotle articulates ideas that are most reconcilable with Plato's ideas are spotlighted and then joined together to form the basis of newly systematized Aristotelian philosophy" (Wisnovsky [2005], 92–136 and in particular 98). Ammonius' task was then "passed along to Ammonius' students Asclepius and Philoponus, several of whose commentaries on Aristotle were translated into Arabic in the ninth and tenth centuries". In metaphysics, the efforts of Ammonius and his disciples to reconcile Plato and Aristotle produced a theory of God's causality in which God was a composite of efficient and final causality: as efficient cause it was the Demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus*, who created the world out of matter, but in view of the transcendent Form, and the Neoplatonists' One, who was the original source of the downward procession of existence to each thing in the universe. God as final cause was either the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, who causes the eternal circular motion of the heavens; or it was the Neoplatonists' Good, who is the ultimate destination of the upward reversion of each thing toward well-being. These commentators, moreover, linked to God's efficient causality the fact that it was creatively involved with and productive of the world and to God's final causality the fact that it was separate from and transcendent of the world (Wisnovsky [2002], 101–105; Wisnovsky [2005], 61–78). In Avicenna's opinion, this theory produces a duality in God. Hence, he tried to find a fresh approach to the problem according to his exegesis of *Metaph.* E 5 and *De Interpretatione* XII–XIII. In the first passage, Aristotle offers several different meanings of necessary; this passage provided Avicenna with the material he needed to fashion his distinction between "the necessary of existence in itself" – God – and "the necessary of existence through another". The second passage in Arabic translation offers this terminology: no longer *k-w-n* but *w-ġ-d* for existence, and no longer *d-r-r* but *w-ġ-b* for necessary (Wisnovsky [2005], 197–217). Avicenna found a concept of necessary which was able to join together the two different causalities of God without producing duality in Him. In fact, the formula "the necessary of existence in itself" can be understood as the simplicity, immutability and eternity of God who transcends the world, or as the basic necessity of God which is productive and from which all other necessities derive (Wisnovsky [2002], 108–112; Wisnovsky [2005], 181–195). In this case too, according to Wisnovsky, Avicenna's solution must be considered against the frame of the problems produced by the commentators of the Ammonian synthesis and the ontology and theology of the Muslim Ash'arite and Māturidite *mutakallimūn*.

the lover. Therefore, Avicenna tries to clarify the nature of this desired good. It is not one of the perfections which belong to the substance in motion or which can be obtained through motion, in which case motion ceases: it is pure subsistent good to which the sphere tries to assimilate and uniform itself (*al-tašabbuhu bi*).⁴⁶² Hence this Pure Good is an object of imitation.⁴⁶³ Avicenna makes clear the ontological distance between the Immobile Mover and the heavenly sphere and he adds that this latter uniforms itself to the first only as far as possible.

Now, to the substance of the sphere, under the aspect of its position and place, something potential happens, while for the assimilation to the Highest Good (*al-tašabbuhu bi-l-ḥayr al-aqṣā*) it is necessary that the thing remains always in the fullest perfection which belongs to it; since it is not possible for the heavenly substance to [remain] in such [perfection] in number, it preserves its own perfection in species and in succession. In this way, movement becomes something which preserves that which, concerning this perfection, is possible. The principle of [such a motion] is the desire of

⁴⁶² *Ilāhīyyāt*, IX. 2, 389.4–9 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed.

⁴⁶³ In my opinion Avicenna's concept of God's final causality through the idea of imitation (*tašabbuh*) depends on the Arabic Alexander (Martini Bonadeo [2004] and on the Arabic Neoplatonic tradition which deeply influenced the reception of the Greek Alexander. As C. D'Ancona (2007), 29–55 has demonstrated, the interpretation of the causality of the Immobile Mover in terms of a movement produced by the desire to imitate it, present in the Arabic Alexander and Themistius, was doctrinally and terminologically formulated for the first time in a passage of the pseudo-*Theology* (113.16–17 e 114.7–16 Badawī). I quote D'Ancona's translation at pages 42–43: "Vogliamo svolgere l'indagine sull'Intelletto, su come esso è e come è stato creato e come il Creatore lo ha creato e lo ha reso eterna visione. (...) Incominciamo e diciamo: colui che vuole sapere in che modo l'Uno Vero ha creato le cose molteplici deve rivolgere il suo sguardo all'Uno Vero soltanto, lasciare tutte le cose che sono al di fuori di lui, tornare a se stesso e rimanere là: vedrà allora con il suo intelletto l'Uno vero, quieto, immoto, trascendente tutte le cose sia intelligibili che sensibili; e vedrà tutte le altre cose come immagini sussistenti (*aṣnām munbaṭa*), che si inchinano a lui – è così infatti che le cose si trovano a muoversi verso di lui, intendo che per ogni cosa che si muove c'è qualcosa verso cui si muove, altrimenti non si muoverebbe affatto: la cosa che si muove si muove solo per il desiderio (*šawq*) della cosa da cui proviene, perché vuole raggiungerla ed assimilarsi ad essa (*al-tašabbuh bihī*). Perciò rivolge il suo sguardo ad essa, e questa è la causa del suo movimento, per necessità (*fa-min aḡli dālika yulqā baṣrahū 'alayhī fa-yakūnu dālika 'illatu ḥarakatin idṭīrāran*). In the pseudo-*Theology*, in fact, we find the tendency to interpret the true and pure One of the Neoplatonic tradition through Aristotle's model of pure act: the True One and the First Agent are identified with each other and with the Koranic God. D'Ancona (2007), 44: "Il principio evocato da Plotino per spiegare il "movimento" di processione del molteplice in termini di ἐπιτροφή dell'Intelletto verso l'Uno, cioè la necessaria esistenza di un fine per ogni movimento, è giustificato nella versione araba attraverso il desiderio di imitazione del Primo Principio: l' ἐπιτροφή è a sua volta interpretata come uno sguardo diretto verso il fine, il quale diviene così la causa del movimento. La fusione fra la teologia di *Lambda* e la teoria plotiniana dei tre principi Uno, Intelletto e Anima non potrebbe essere più spontanea, né il punto di giuntura meno visibile".

assimilation to the Highest Good (*bi-l-ḥayr al-aqṣā*), which consists in conserving the fullest perfection as much as possible, while the principle of such a desire is what is intellectually known of the Good.⁴⁶⁴

As in the Arabic Themistius, for Avicenna too, the Immobile Mover of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* becomes that First Cause which also combines Platonic paradigmatic causality with the Neoplatonic One. The Immobile Mover is efficient cause and first agent of all existents and, at the same time the final cause which moves as an object of love and substantial perfection. Insofar as object of love, it is identified with the Highest Good, the noblest of all existent beings, and the cause of a desire for imitation. This desire for imitation of the most perfect reality expresses itself in the circular motion of the heavenly sphere, produced in the attempt at imitating the immobility of the Prime Mover and then in the other degrees of being.

Following Themistius, Avicenna describes the Prime Mover as omniscient, because it contains the ideas of all things and so, knowing the causes of every knowable thing, it knows everything.⁴⁶⁵ The Immobile Mover is therefore the condition of the intelligibility of the universe.

Moreover, Avicenna wrote a *Commentary on Book Lambda* (*Šarḥ kitāb ḥarf al-Lām*), a part of the *Kitāb al-inṣāf*,⁴⁶⁶ where he maintains that the First Principle is Transcendent One, Absolute Being, and *Necesse Esse*. The Neoplatonic One becomes God, Creator of the universe and cause of its per-duration because He is supra-abundance of perfection and power. Creatures tend to this cause, as far as it is possible for them to do so, and their progressive assimilation is intended as the reciprocal of the emanation of things from the First Principle and the providential action of the First Cause towards creatures. Aristotelian cosmology and the Neoplatonic model of derivation are perfectly joined together.

Let us turn now to the vicissitudes of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the post-Avicennian *falsafa*: did a 'theologizing' or an 'ontologizing' reading prevail? Did the models of metaphysics proposed by al-Kindī and al-Fārābī survive to the *Ilāhīyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*? Was there a reaction to Avicenna's metaphysical science in the Muslim East? Did it express itself in the form of a return to Aristotle, such as, for instance, that of Averroes in al-Andalus?

⁴⁶⁴ Ibidem, IX.2, 390.1–5 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed, my translation. Cf. Marmura (2005), 314.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibidem, VIII.6, 359.12–360.10 Moussa–Dunya–Zayed.

⁴⁶⁶ Badawī (1947), 22–33; cf. Janssens (2003), 401–416. A new edition of Avicenna's *Commentary on Book Lambda*, translated into French, introduced, and annotated by M. Sebtī and M. Geoffroy is forthcoming. I thank the authors to let me read parts of their work before publishing it.

I will answer these questions by introducing the metaphysical work of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī (1162–1231 AD). He will prove to be essential for knowledge of the Arabic tradition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the Muslim East. He is the mouthpiece of a school tradition which, parting company with the free arrangement of the Greek sources typical of Avicenna's writings, expressed the need to go back to the “primitive” Aristotle. In an only apparently paradoxical way, the return to this “primitive” Aristotle was less a return to the Aristotle of the Greek sources than a re-proposition of the Aristotelianism of the origins of *falsafa*.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY OF ‘ABD AL-LAṬĪF AL-BAĠDĀDĪ

The life and activity of Muwaffaq al-Dīn Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf al-Baġdādī (Rabī’ I 557/1162–63 – 12 Muḥarram 629/1231 AD) took place in a particularly significant and interesting moment in the Arabic philosophical tradition.

As we have seen in the previous chapter the establishment of *falsafa* between the eighth and ninth centuries was due to the contribution of the translators and al-Kindī’s thought. After the tenth-century Aristotelian circle of Baghdad with its intention to classify the sciences and return to a literal commentary of the Aristotelian text on the Alexandrine model, from the end of the eleventh, throughout the twelfth, and up to the beginning of the thirteenth century the production of original philosophical treatises became dominant and widespread with respect to the study of Greek philosophical literature in Arabic translation. This tendency generated a reaction which has been defined as “purist”.¹

Only the most famous example of a “return to Aristotle”, that of Averroes and his long commentaries, which in al-Andalus resulted in a return to the study of the Aristotelian texts in Arabic translation, and the doctrinal commentary added to the lemmata of the text is known outside the specialist environment for its obvious importance in medieval Latin philosophy. But Averroes’ experience in al-Andalus was not an isolated case: an analogous phenomenon also occurred in the Muslim East, whose protagonist was ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī.²

¹ Gutas (1998), 153–154 (cf. Introduction, note 1); Gutas (2001), 767–796 and in particular 792–794; Gutas (2002), 81–97 and in particular 90–91, maintains that Avicenna’s philosophy provoked a very strong reaction both in his supporters and his detractors: they could not avoid using it as their frame of reference. Avicenna’s thought provoked intense philosophical activity for more than three centuries, in which, according to Gutas, we can distinguish three distinct tendencies: that of the reactionaries and conservatives, who saw themselves in an “original” Aristotelian perspective in opposition to Avicenna; that of the reformers who considered Avicenna’s philosophy to be perfectible; and that of the loyalists who defended it. Gutas classifies all the philosophers of al-Andalus (including writers such as Ibn Ṭufayl, Averroes, and Maimonides) to be among the exponents of the first form of reaction. He affirms, moreover, “pro-Aristotelian reactions to Avicenna can be witnessed sporadically in the East. The best example of scholarly pedantry in this regard is provided by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī”.

² Cf. Martini Bonadeo (2005a), 627–668; Martini Bonadeo (2011), 1–4.

'Abd al-Laṭīf has been considered a pedantic scholar, whose approach to science was scholastic and legalistic rather than experimental and creative.³ Nevertheless the interpretative categories of 'purist' and 'compiler' are not suitable for describing the intellectual life of this writer. In the East, he assumed the same position which had been held a generation before him by Averroes in al-Andalus: the rejection of Avicenna's philosophy and a return to the 'primitive' Aristotle. He reacted in fact against Avicenna's medical and philosophical thought, which he believed had obscured the teaching of the "infallible" Greeks, and he maintained the need to return to the original Greek works (in their Arabic translation naturally) and in particular the need to return to Aristotle in philosophy and Hippocrates, via Galen, in medicine.

This position comes across clearly in his biography (*sīra*). The *sīra* of his life seems to have formed part of a larger work entitled *ta'riḥ*, no longer extant, which he wrote for his son Šaraf al-Dīn ibn Yūsuf. The *sīra* is contained in the bio-bibliographical work by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 1270), the *Sources of Information on the Classes of Physicians* ('*Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*)⁴ and even more in an autobiography, still unpublished, contained in the *Book of the Two Pieces of Advice* (*Kitāb al-Naṣiḥatayn*).⁵

³ See the references in the previous note. This was also the judgment of one of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's well-known contemporaries, al-Qifṭī (1172–1248), who wrote a personal attack on his scholarly work in *The Information of the Narrators on Renowned Grammarians* (*Inbāh al-ruwāt 'alā anbāh al-nuḥāt*): "He claimed to write books containing original materials, but merely occupied himself with compiling other books. He either summarized them or made unnecessary additions to them. His writings are inadequate and radiate emotional coldness. When he met a person who was specialized in a particular kind of knowledge, he avoided discussing that branch of knowledge with him and changed the subject. He was uncertain about anything he claimed or proclaimed. I used to meet him on regular basis and knew him well. So, I was able to observe him from nearby and put him to the test with regard to the matters in which he claimed to be a specialist, but in which he actually groped in the dark just as a blind who pretended to be quick-sighted" (Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt 'alā anbāh al-nuḥāt*, II.194,10–196.3 Ibrāhīm; English translation by N.P. Jooose). Jooose (2007) analyzed in detail this information on 'Abd al-Laṭīf by Ibn al-Qifṭī and the use of it in Ghalioungui–Abdou (1972).

⁴ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II.201–213 Müller; 683–696 Nizār Riḍā. In this chapter the English translation of the titles of the Arabic treatises mentioned is given only on their first occurrence.

⁵ Other passages from 'Abd al-Laṭīf's biography which are not contained in either Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a or in his manuscript autobiography and which do not seem to be part of any other writing listed among the works of this author either, have been preserved by al-Dahabī's *History of Islam* (*Ta'riḥ al-Islām*). This was observed for the first time by J. Von Somogyi (1937), 105–130, who listed the events registered by al-Dahabī from 'Abd al-Laṭīf's text and published two extracts about the Mongols (ms. London, British Museum, *or.* 1640, ff. 173r17–173v18 and 190v6–192r16). Cahen (1970), 101–128, has copied all the passages in question from a second manuscript: İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi *Aya Sofya* 3012.

From these not wholly concordant texts there emerge elements which shed light on 'Abd al-Laṭīf's philosophical position, often characterised by violent controversies, the independence of his convictions, slowly-matured but put forward with passion in his writings, and, finally, his dedication to such diverse fields of research as grammar, law, history, philosophy, philology, theology, and medicine.

Finally, further information on 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī can be found in the report of his journey in Egypt entitled *Book of the Report and Account of the Things which I Witnessed and the Events Seen in the Land of Egypt (Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-i'tibār fi-l-umūr al-mušāhada wa-l-ḥawādīṭ al-mu'āyana bi-arḍ miṣr)*.⁶ This work is also useful in that it integrates the two biographical works we possess and allow us to add details to our portrait of this writer.

Cahen grouped the events as follows: those concerning the caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (1158–1225); those concerning the Ayyūbids; those concerning the Ḥwārizmian dynasty; and those concerning the Mongols. See also Dietrich (1964), 101–102, where he mentions information from the ancients and modern studies on 'Abd al-Laṭīf. To the ancient sources quoted by Dietrich we must add Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-Umarī's *Routes Toward Insight into the Capital Empires (Masālik al-abṣār fi mamālik al-amṣār)*. I heartily thank professor G. Endress for having placed the manuscript containing the *Kitāb al-Naṣīḥatayn* in my hands and for having guided my reading of it during the winter term 2000–2001 at the Seminar für Orientalistik of Ruhr Universität in Bochum.

⁶ One of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's most important works, lost to us, was a history of Egypt (cf. Ibn Šakir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafāyāt*, II, 386.14 'Abbās: *Kitāb aḥbār Miṣr al-kabīr*). 'Abd al-Laṭīf extracted from it a brief essay in which he proposed to narrate only that history of Egypt which he had witnessed or about which he had collected the testimony of direct witnesses. This *muḥtaṣar* or compendium is precisely the *Kitāb al-ifāda wa-l-i'tibār fi-l-umūr al-mušāhada wa-l-ḥawādīṭ al-mu'āyana bi-arḍ Miṣr* (cf. Ibn Šakir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafāyāt*, II, 386. 14–15 'Abbās: *al-Ifāda fi-aḥbār miṣr*). As 'Abd al-Laṭīf writes in the preface, "When I finished my book on Egypt, which contained thirteen chapters, I thought I would extract from it the events which I had witnessed directly, as it is nearer to the truth, because that part inspires most confidence and excites the most admiration. Also, it is more wonderful in its effects upon the people who hear it. In fact everything apart from what I witnessed personally is already to be found, or most of it, and in some cases all of it, in the books of my predecessors. I devoted two chapters of my book (*scil.* on Egypt) to the things that I saw, and I have separated these to form the relation which I publish today, which is divided into two books" Zand–Videan–Videan (1965), 12.3–8, 13. In this report, however 'Abd al-Laṭīf does not merely narrate the events of the great famine and the consequent epidemic which infested Egypt in 1200–1202, but has left us a precise description of the landscape, the vegetation of the place, and in particular of the medicinal plants, the animal species, exotic food, ancient monuments, buildings, the ships he saw along the Nile, the river's periodic floods, and its importance for the Egyptian economy. The *Kitāb al-ifāda wa-l-i'tibār*, preserved in an autograph manuscript (ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library, *or.* 1149), was the only work by 'Abd al-Laṭīf known in Europe from the end of the eighteenth century and the only one to be translated into various European languages: there is a German translation by Wahl (1790), a Latin version by White (1800), a French version by De Sacy (1810), and finally a more recent English translation already quoted above by Zand–Videan–Videan (1965).

In this chapter I will present ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s biography first of all as given by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, coalescing it with information taken from the report of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s stay in Egypt, with the aim of framing our author in a historical and cultural context which is still little investigated. I will then examine not only ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s autobiography as taken from the *Book of the Two Pieces of Advice*, but the entire treatise. This text, in fact, reveals itself to be particularly useful in outlining ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s intellectual biography, his educational itinerary, the library he had at his disposal, and his cultural attitude with regard to the Ancients. As S. Toorawa observes: “In spite of conforming somewhat to the standard curriculum vitae model, it is clear from these fragments and those preserved in other works that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s *sīra* was replete with insights and judgements about the places he lived and visited, the people he encountered, and the intellectual currents of his days”.⁷

I will close the chapter with a section on his encyclopaedic, original works. These works will be described according to an analysis of the miscellaneous manuscript Bursa, *Hüseyn Çelebi*, 823, which contains various of his treatises, and will be integrated by a number of pages in which I bring together and compare the ancient lists of his works.

1. *‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī in the Sources of Information on the Classes of Physicians by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a*

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a (1194–1270),⁸ the author of the *Sources of Information on the Classes of Physicians* belonged to a prestigious family of doctors, originally operating in Cairo in the service of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn,⁹ and later in the famous hospital in Damascus founded by Nūr al-Dīn ibn Zankī.¹⁰ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a grew up and was educated in Damascus in the traditional Islamic and the Greek sciences. He also practiced as a doctor, first in the Nāṣirī hospital in Cairo as from 1233, and then in the Nūri hospital in Damascus and, finally, in the service of ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak, in Sarḥad, near Damascus.

The *Sources of Information on the Classes of Physicians* is a fundamental bio-bibliographical work for any exact reconstruction of Arabic Aristotelianism, from the origins of Islam up to the thirteenth century.

⁷ Toorawa (2001), 156.

⁸ Cf. Leclerc (1876), 2.187–193; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. 1.560; Vernet (1986), III. 693–694.

⁹ This is Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Abū l-Muzaffar Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb (1138–1193), Saladin, the founder of the Ayyūbid dynasty and champion of the *ġihād* against the Crusaders. Cf. Richards (1995), VIII. 910–914 and in particular the rich bibliography on 914.

¹⁰ Cf. Elisséeff (1995), VIII 127–132.

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a wrote an initial version of it in 1242/3 AD and a second one in 1268/9. The work is a mine of information on the Arabic Peripatetics, who in their investigation of nature, as was proper for the *φυσικοί*, combined a purely philosophical interest with a competence of a medical nature.

In the first eight chapters Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a outlines the development of medical science from its invention, through its Greek, Alexandrine, and Islamic tradition, to describe the medical profession in ‘Abbāsid Baghdad. In the ninth chapter he gives brief information on the translators and their patrons. The remaining six chapters are entirely devoted to the doctors of Iraq, Persia, India, Morocco, Spain, Egypt, and Syria. The presentation of these doctors follows a rather precise format, modelled on Diogenes Laertius, which indicates, in order, the facts regarding the life of each doctor, a list of their works, and their sayings.¹¹

In the fifteenth chapter, entirely devoted to the doctors operating in Syria, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a introduces the biography of ‘Abd al-Latīf al-Baġdādī. It is a composition of first-person extracts from ‘Abd al-Latīf’s autobiography and additional firsthand knowledge supplied by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a whose grandfather, Yūnus was close friend of ‘Abd al-Latīf al-Baġdādī. Moreover ‘Abd al-Latīf was the teacher of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a’s father, al-Qāsim. ‘Abd al-Latīf is presented from the beginning as follows:

Muwaffaq al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Latīf al-Baġdādī¹²

He is the learned master, the *imām*, the excellent Muwaffaq al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Latīf ibn Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Sa‘d,

¹¹ The *Ṭabaqāt* are a literary genre which present classes of characters identified according to categories (for example the experts of tradition according to the different *madāhib*, sages, doctors) and ordered by generation. The origin of the *Ṭabaqāt* has been discussed by various scholars: Gilliot (2000), X.7–10 believes that it can be traced back to the entirely Muslim concept of *ḥadīth* (tradition); Heffening (1937), 214–215 thinks, on the other hand, that it is due to the specifically Arab interest in biographies and genealogies; Rosenthal, (1968), 93–95, finally, sees in the *Ṭabaqāt* the natural consequence of the tradition of the so-called “Companions of the Prophet”.

¹² Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, II. 201–213 Müller; 683–696 Nizār Riḍā; cf. the English translation by Gibb (1927), 65–90 and the partial English translation by Toorawa (2001), 156–164; Toorawa (2004), 91–109. Gibb’s translation is contained in a book published in London in 1927 entitled *Healing through Spirit Agency by the Great Persian Physician Abduhl Latif (‘The Man of Baġdād’) and Information concerning the Life Hereafter of the Deepest Interest to all enquirers and students of Psychic Phenomena*. On the bizarre affiliation of ‘Abd al-Latīf with twentieth-century spiritualism cf. Joosse (2007a), 211–229; in England after the World War I within the spiritualistic movement ‘Abd al-Latīf became known as the Great Persian Physician Abduhl Latif and acted as a control of mediums. Until the late sixties he practised the art of healing as the head of a medical mission somewhere in the Spheres.

also known as Ibn al-Labbād,¹³ originating from Mosul and a native of Baghdad. He was renowned in the different sciences, full of virtue, expressed himself brilliantly, and wrote a great number of works. He was furthermore excellent at grammar and lexicography,¹⁴ with an expert knowledge of *kalām* and medicine. He had already studied the medical art when he found himself in Damascus and he had a great reputation in this discipline. A great number of students and other doctors came to him to take lessons under his direction.

During his youth his father introduces him to the study of the oral tradition of *ḥadīṭ* with Abū l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Bāqī, known as ‘Abd al-Battī,¹⁵ Abū Zur‘a Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad al-Qudsi,¹⁶ Abū l-Qāsim Yaḥyā ibn Ṭābit, known as al-Wakīl,¹⁷ and others.

¹³ Ibn al-Labbād literally means ‘the son of a felt manufacturer’. The reason why to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf was given this nickname is not known.

¹⁴ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf had an expert knowledge of Arabic grammar and lexicography. In his biography given by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a and in his autobiography he lists as the sources of his education the corner stones of Arabic grammatical and lexicographical studies. As early as the eighth century grammatical knowledge taken from pre-Islamic poetry and the Koran had been codified in two fundamental texts: the *Treatise on Grammar* (always referred to as *al-Kitāb* or *Kitāb Sibawayh*) by Sibawayh (d. 793) and the *Treatise on Grammar Terms* (*Kitāb ḥudūd al-naḥw*) by al-Farrā‘ (d. 822) which reflected the approach of the grammatical schools of Baṣra and Kūfa respectively. In the ninth century these two texts appeared in Baghdad, which had become the centre of grammatical studies: the former due to al-Mubarrad (d. 898), and the latter due to Ṭa‘lab (d. 904). The two rival masters al-Mubarrad and Ṭa‘lab clashed in veritable disputes (*munāzarāt*) in the mosques and the squares before a great crowd of followers and listeners. Al-Mubarrad’s teaching had greater success, both because of the proverbial clarity of the master and because al-Mubarrad had written a simplified version of Sibawayh’s text, the *Compendium* (*Kitāb al-Muṭaḍḍab*). The method (*maḍhab*) of the school of Baṣra imposed itself in the ‘Abbāsīd capital. In the first half of the tenth century Ibn al-Sarrāġ (d. 928), the youngest of al-Mubarrad’s followers, introduced divisions of logic derived from Aristotle into his *Treatise on the Fundamental Elements of Grammar* (*Kitāb al-Uṣūl fi l-naḥw*). In the second half of the same century the study of grammar reached its apogee with the work of Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī (d. 987) with his treatise *The Explanation of Grammar* (*Al-īdāh fi l-naḥw*) and the *Treatise of Splendours* (*Kitāb al-luma‘*) by Ibn Ğinnī (d. 1002). The study of grammar, finally, came back to life again in the twelfth century, after a decline in the eleventh, with al-Anbārī (d. 1181) author of the *Book of Judgement* (*Kitāb al-Insāf*). Cf. Sezgin (1984), IX. Versteegh (1987), II.148–76; Endress (1986), 163–299.

¹⁵ Abū l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Baqī ibn Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Baġdādī, known as ‘Abd al-Battī (1084–1169). Cf. Toorawa (2004), 93–94: he is identified by the biographers as the chief traditionist of Iraq (*musnid al-Iraq*). He heard *ḥadīṭ* from Mālik ibn ‘Alī al-Bāniyāsī, Ḥamad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥaddād, al-Tamīmī and others. His *samā‘* is reported to have been sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*), according to Ibn al-Imād, *Ṣaḍarāt al-ḍahab fi aḥbār man ḍahab* (1931), IV.213.

¹⁶ Abū Zur‘a Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī al-Hamaḍānī. Cf. Toorawa (2004), 94: he was born in 1088 in Rayy and died in Hamaḍān in 1170. He is cited as one of the teachers of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥayy ibn al-Rabī‘. His own teachers included ‘Abdūs, al-Sālarmakī and al-Kāmilī according to Ibn al-Imād, *Ṣaḍarāt al-ḍahab fi aḥbār man ḍahab* (1931), IV.217.

¹⁷ Abū l-Qāsim Yaḥyā ibn Ṭābit al-Wakīl identified by al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣāfi‘iyya al-kubrā*, VIII.169, as Ibn Bundar. He heard *ḥadīṭ* from a number of renowned teachers. He died in 1170. Cf. Toorawa (2004), 94.

Yūsuf, the father of the learned master Muwaffaq al-Dīn, who practised the science of *ḥadīth*, was excellent in the disciplines of the Koran and its different readings;¹⁸ he was famous in the context of his current of theologico-juridical studies (*madḥab*),¹⁹ and in controversy (*ḥilāf*), and, finally, in theology and Muslim law.²⁰ But he only had a smattering of the rational disciplines. Sulaymān, the paternal uncle of the learned master Muwaffaq al-Dīn, was a famous jurist.²¹

The learned master Muwaffaq al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Laṭīf was a great worker: he did not waste a minute of his time in devoting himself to the study of books, their composition, and the art of writing. I have found many things in his hand because he wrote numerous copies of his works and thus also transcribed many treatises from the works of his predecessors.

He was a friend of my grandfather’s; there was a great friendship between them when they were both in Egypt. My father and my uncle studied the literary arts under his guidance. My uncle also studied the works of Aristotle with him. The learned master Muwaffaq al-Dīn was in fact very interested in them and very perspicacious in understanding their meaning.

From Egypt he went to Damascus and stayed there for a certain period of time. He was most useful to the people there with his teaching. I saw him when he was living in Damascus, the last time he stayed there. He was an old, thin man, of medium height, refined in his oral expression and excellent in his explanation. His written compositions were more effective than his oral performances. God have mercy on him, he often spoke excessively due to the high opinion he had of himself. He found the intellectuals of his time and many of the earlier times to be incomplete. He criticised above all the learned men of Persia and their works, in particular the master, the *raʿīs*²² Ibn Sīnā and people like him.

The salient features which characterize the life and the work of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī already emerge from these first few lines. Ibn Abī

¹⁸ The *qirāʾāt* indicate literally the variants in the reading of the Koran. Muslims officially recognise seven of these (Paret [1986], V.127–129; Makdīsī [1981], 142–143).

¹⁹ The translation of the term *madḥab*, which I have translated as “current of theologico-juridical studies” is particularly problematic. This term, which literally means a ‘way’ or a ‘direction to follow’ and hence also a ‘thesis’ or ‘opinion’ is often wrongly translated as ‘sect’ or ‘rite’. The term ‘sect’ however is not correct, as it indicates a dissident group in a religious community, heretical in the eyes of the other members of the same community. The Sunni *madāḥib* cannot therefore be translated as ‘sects’ since they were and are considered to be equally orthodox. The term ‘rite’ is applied to different Christian communities distinguished from one another by their liturgy, and hence it cannot be applied to the *madāḥib*. An acceptable translation of the term *madḥab* is ‘school’ which however cannot be used in this context because it does not convey the exact meaning of the term. Cf. Makdīsī (1981), 1–9; Hourani (1991), 158–162.

²⁰ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s father Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad was probably Ṣayḥ Abū l-Izz al-Mawṣilī. Cf. Toorawa (2004), 93.

²¹ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s uncle was most likely the Abū l-Faḍl Sulaymān ibn Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Mawṣilī al-Ṣūfī (1133–1215) who studied *ḥadīth* under Ismāʿīl ibn al-Samarqandī and other authorities. Cf. Toorawa (2004), 93.

²² The term *raʿīs* literally means head; here it is used as an honorific title.

Uṣaybi'a stresses, first of all, 'Abd al-Laṭīf's youthful education in the traditional Islamic sciences, his fame in the medical profession, and his great interest in Aristotelian philosophy. In order to strengthen the veracity of his claims, he draws the links between members of his family and 'Abd al-Laṭīf; he even claims to have met him. Moreover, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a outlines the important features of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's character. He stresses his industriousness in the cultural field, the high opinion he had of himself, and his strong clash with Avicenna and his followers.

This first part is followed by an account of his formative years spent in Baghdad. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a directly quotes 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's own autobiography. 'Abd al-Laṭīf refers the works he studied, the teacher with whom he studied every single work, and the time he took to memorize each.

In the autobiography which he wrote in his hand I copied what this portrait of him says, "I was born in my grandfather's house in *Fālūdaġ* Lane²³ in the year 557 (1162)²⁴ and I grew up and I was instructed under the care of the master Abū l-Naġīb,²⁵ without knowing pleasure and leisure. I spent most of my time listening to lessons in *ḥadīth*. I also procured certificates of audition for myself (*iġāzāt*)²⁶ from the masters of Baghdad and Ḥurāsān, Syria,

²³ The word *fālūdaġ*, a corruption of the Persian *bālūdāh*, designates a type of sweet bread made of flour, starch, water, and honey.

²⁴ 'Abd al-Laṭīf's student Ibn Ḥallikān specifies the month as *Rabī' al-awwal* 557 corresponding to March 1162: Toorawa (2004), 93.

²⁵ 'Abd al-Laṭīf's first master was probably Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Abū l-Naġīb al-Suhrawardī 'Abd al-Qāhir ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Bakrī the famous Sunni mystic. He was the author of *The Manners of the Adepts (Adab al-muridin)*, one of the most widely read handbook of mystical training. He was born in Suhraward in 1097 and around 1113 went to Baghdad where he studied *ḥadīth*, Islamic law according to the *Šāfi'ī* current, Arabic grammar and literature, exegesis (*tafsīr*) and theology (*uṣūl al-dīn*). At about the age of twenty-five he abandoned the courses he was following at the *Nizāmiyya* mosque to lead a solitary ascetic life. Finally he founded a convent on the right bank of the Tigris. When he returned to Baghdad in 1150–1 he was charged with teaching *fiqh* at *Nizāmiyya* and, still in Baghdad, taught *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* in a true *madrasa* situated near his *ribāt*: the *madrasa al-Naġībīyya*. He also continued to hold courses in *šūfism*. In 1161–2 he left Baghdad for Jerusalem; he was forced to stop in Damascus, however, due to the worsening of the conflict between Nūr al-Dīn Zankī and Baldwin. He finally returned to Baghdad where he died shortly afterwards in 1168. He was burnt in his *madrasa*. Cf. Sobieroj (1987), IX.778; De Sacy (1810), 479; Ephrat (2000), 73, 172.

²⁶ When a student had finished studying a text with a master, he could ask him for an *iġāza* or certificate of audition, a letter written and signed by the master which certified knowledge of a given text by that student; on a second level, the student could ask for an *iġāza* of another type, which not only certified his competence in the knowledge of certain texts, but authorised him to teach them in turn. In this way, students went from one master to another, from one city to another, collecting different *iġāzāt*. The documents which testify to this type of teaching are often highly complex and elaborate, since they testify to an entire chain of transmission from master to pupil in the course of generations. On the concept of *iġāza* cf. Makdisi (1981), 140–46; as for the *iġāza bi l-tadris wa-l-iftā'* in the context of law, cf. Makdisi (1990), 26–27.

and Egypt. One day my father said to me, “I have made you listen to the best masters in Baghdad and I have even had you included in the chains of transmission of the elderly masters”.²⁷ In the meantime I had also studied calligraphy and I had memorized²⁸ the *Koran*, the treatise *al-Faṣīḥ*,²⁹ the *Maqāmāt*,³⁰ the *Dīwān* of al-Mutanabbī³¹ among other things, and also a compendium of *fiqh* and one of grammar.

²⁷ Cf. Ephrat (2000), 68–69: “The idea of hearing Islamic teaching directly from a reliable *shaykh* and, through him, becoming a part of an unbroken *isnad*, survived long after the appearance of madrasas. Probably influenced by the Sufi perception of the essence of training or guidance, the personal contact between master and disciple was not only intended to ensure accurate transmission of the ‘knowledge’ contained in a certain text, or to convey personal authority with regard to that text, but to also disseminate ideals and codes of proper Islamic behaviour. An essential component of this tradition was the deeply entrenched belief that the moral rectitude of the transmitter is a prime criterion for determining the validity and quality of the knowledge transmitted. [...] Written texts undoubtedly played a significant role in Islamic learning and the transmission of all other branches of knowledge throughout the period under consideration. Beginning in the late ninth century, a homogeneous corpus of authoritative or fixed texts was in the process of formation, constituting an alternative to the old method of gathering and transmitting knowledge. The student in the so-called manuscript age would normally hear a professor read loud one of the accepted books of sound traditions or compilations of the legal schools’ ‘founding fathers’, or he could simply read a text silently to himself in mosques and madrasas libraries. But for all the use and accessibility of written texts, the old practices and rituals of oral transmission (recitation, dictation, oralized reading) remained intact, demonstrated by many examples of a negative attitude toward students who read to themselves. [...] The book, therefore, represented a continuing and unbroken oral communication, transmitted even further by the author. The *ijāza*, of course, retained its traditional character: a personal certificate conferred by the teacher to his disciple, entitling him to teach a certain text only. It never developed into an institutionalized degree such as the *licentia docendi* granted by the European universities with the consent of church authorities, nor its issuance involve any formal procedures. This particular characteristic of the *ijāza* might also explain cases in which *ijāzas* were obtained outside specific educational frameworks, and were mingled with other pursuits. Because obtaining an *ijāza* depended on personal contact between teacher and discipline, studying in some capacity with a particularly prominent scholar was the goal of those seeking knowledge, rather than studying in a specific educational framework”.

²⁸ On memorization as a methodology of teaching see Makdisi (1981), 99–105; Makdisi (1990), 202–207.

²⁹ This is the famous grammatical work *On What is Pure in (Arabic) Language (al-Faṣīḥ fi-l-luġa)* by Abū l-Abbās Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Zayd (815–904), the well-known master of the school of Kūfa known as Taʿlab (cf. note 14). Cf. also Sezgin (1982), VII.141–147 and in particular 143–144 n. 29 where the author reminds us that Ibn Abī Uṣaybīʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*, II.211.4 Müller, mentions a supplement to the treatise *al-Faṣīḥ fi-l-luġa* written by ʿAbd al-Latīf himself, entitled *Ḍayl al-Faṣīḥ*. This work by ʿAbd al-Latīf is found in the list of his works in Ibn Abī Uṣaybīʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*, II.211.4–5 Müller, and in that presented by Ibn Šākīr al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, II. 386.7 ʿAbbās.

³⁰ The author is referring to the literary work the *Sessions (Maqāmāt)* by Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUṭmān ibn al-Ḥarīrī al-Baṣrī (1054–1122) (cf. al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabāʾ*, 223.4–225.9 Amer); Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I.486–99. On the genre of the *maqāma* or ornate rhyming prose cf. Horst (1987), II. 225–227.

³¹ This is the famous collection of poetry by Abū l-Ṭayyib Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ġuʿfī, al-Mutanabbī (915–965): cf. al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabāʾ*, 176.6–180.8 Amer; Sezgin (1975), II. 484–497; Blachère (1935); Gabrieli (1972).

Later when I grew up, my father took me to Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Anbārī.³² At that time, he was the Master of masters of Baghdad and had a long-lasting friendship with my father, going back to the times of their study of *fiqh* at the *Nizāmīyya madrasa*.³³ I studied the preface to the text *al-Faṣīḥ* with him; he made many speeches to no purpose, one after another, of which I understood nothing, but the students around him admired him greatly. So the master said, “I do not deal with the education of young boys, take him to my pupil al-Waḡīḥ al-Wāsiṭī³⁴ to study under his guidance and when his situation has improved he shall study under my guidance.

Al-Waḡīḥ was the master of several of the children of the Chief Master (*raʿīs al-ruʿasāʾ*).³⁵ He was a blind man, rich and worthy; he welcomed me with open arms and started to teach me from early morning to the end of the

³² This is Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh Abū l-Barakāt al-Anbārī (119–1181), author of the *Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-udabāʾ* which I use as a reference source, together with the more complete al-Qiftī’s *Inbāḥ al-ruwāt ‘alā anbāḥ al-nuḥāt* Ibrāhīm, because of their chronological closeness to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf. Al-Anbārī was in fact a schoolmate of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s father. Al-Anbārī was born in Anbār, a little village on the banks of the Euphrates in the north-east of Iraq. He came to Baghdad around 1140: at that time the *Nizāmīyya madrasa* was at its apogee and there he studied *fiqh* with Ibn al-Razzāz [cf. Ephrat (2000), 121–122, 172], *adab*-literature with Abū Maṣūʿ al-Gawālīqī, *ḥadīṭ* with ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb al-Anmāṭī to become himself professor of these sciences and in particular of Arabic grammar. He later retired to private life to devote himself entirely to study. Cf. al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-udabāʾ*, xiii–xxi Amer; Brockelmann (1943), I.334; Brockelmann (1937) suppl. I.494; Ephrat (2000), 72, who mentions al-Anbārī’s master of philology, Abū l-Saʿādā Hibat Allāh ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣaḡari.

³³ On the *madrasa* (eleventh century), the Muslim institution of knowledge *par excellence*, born as a natural development of two previous Islamic institutions, the *masjīd* (twelfth century), in its role as the appointed place for the teaching of *fiqh* law, and the *ḥān*, that is to say, the accommodation which housed law students, cf. Makdisi (1981), in particular 9–34; Ephrat (2000). The main difference between the *masjīd* – *ḥān* complex and the *madrasa* proper, according to Makdisi, lay in their legal status. Both the *masjīd* – *ḥān* complex and the *madrasa* were based on the law of *waqf* or donation (that is, the setting up of a charitable fund for paying the expenses of the infrastructure, the purchase of books, the master’s pay – usually the *imām* of the mosque – and the students’ accommodation expenses), however, once set up in the form of a donation, the *masjīd* became free of any form of control by its founder, while for the *madrasa* the founder and his family could retain direct control. On the law of *waqf* cf. Makdisi (1981), 35–74. The *Nizāmīyya madrasa* was founded in Baghdad in 1067 by Nizām al-Mulk: on the founder of the *Nizāmīyya madrasa* and his library cf. Talas (1939); Eche (1967), 166–172; cf. also Makdisi (1990), in particular 57–59; 188–191.

³⁴ On Abū Bakr al-Mubārak ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Mubārak ibn Abī al-Azhar Saʿīd Waḡīḥ al-Dīn Ibn al-Daḥḥān al-Darīr al-Wāsiṭī (d. 1215) cf. Makdisi (1990), 58–59: he held his *ḥalqa* in the *Zafariyya Mosque*. Cf. Toorawa (2004), 96: “He had in his youth memorized the *Koran* and all its variant readings on the authority of Abū Saʿīd Nūr ibn Muḥammad ibn Sālim al-Adīb and Abū l-Faraḡ al-Alāʾ ibn ‘Alī, the poet known as al-Sawādī. He then moved to Baghdad from Wāsiṭ, settled, and resided in the *Zafariyya Mosque*. He attended the *maḡlis* of Ibn al-Ḥaṣṣāb al-Naḥwī and served as an advanced student (*ṣāḥib*) of al-Anbārī. He studied *ḥadīṭ* with Abū Zurʿa and ḥanafī *fiqh* too, though he had started out ḥanbalī. He became professor of grammar at the *Nizāmīyya*; because of the *waqf* restrictions permitting only the tenure of a Šāfiʿī professor, he changed to this *madḥab*”.

³⁵ On the honorific title *raʿīs al-ruʿasāʾ* see Mottahedeh (1980), 130–135; cf. below note 81.

day with gentle ways. I attended his course at the *Zāfariyya* mosque and he prepared a series of commentaries for me and discussed them with me. Then he read my lesson and explained it with his own comments. Afterwards we left the mosque and along the road he went with me over what I had learnt. Then when we reached his house, he took out the books, which he was working on himself; I made him learn them by heart and at the same time I also learnt them by heart with him. Then he presented himself to the master Kamāl al-Dīn and he recited his lesson and Kamāl al-Dīn commented on it for him, while I stayed and listened. I was thus educated to try and exceed him in my memory and ability to understand. I spent most of the night learning by heart and repeating. We carried on like this for a certain period of time. Everything that came to my memory increased in quantity and quality, my ability to understand got stronger and became capable of giving explanations, my intelligence was stimulated and perfected and I was inseparable from my master [i.e. Waḡīh al-Wāsiṭī] and from my master's master [i.e. Kamāl al-Dīn al-Anbārī].

The first thing I showed I had learnt by heart was the *Lumaʿ* in eight months.³⁶ I listened to it being commented on every day as much as possible from what the others read, I returned home and studied the commentaries by al-Ṭamānīnī,³⁷ Šarīf ʿUmar ibn Ḥamza,³⁸ and Ibn Burhān,³⁹ and thus all the commentaries I managed to find. I commented on them for some students who had entrusted themselves to me until I could speak on every chapter and every quire (scil. of the *Lumaʿ*), but this was neither a fraction of all I knew and had to say.

Then I learnt the *Adab al-kātib* by Ibn Qutayba perfectly by heart: the first half in a few months, the *Taqwīm al-lisān* in fourteen days, since there were fourteen quires. Then I learnt by heart the *Muškil al-Qurʾān*, and the *Ġarīb al-Qurʾān* by the same author, in a short space of time.⁴⁰

³⁶ Ibn Ġinnī, *Kitāb al-lumaʿ* Kerchrida (1976). On Abū l-Faḥ ʿUṭmān ibn Ġinnī al-Mawšili (941–1002) cf. al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbāʿ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabāʿ*, 197.3–198.17 Amer; Sezgin (1984), IX.173–182, 248.

³⁷ On al-Ṭamānīnī (Abū l-Qāsim ʿUmar ibn Ṭābit d. 1050) cf. Sezgin (1984), IX.174; 186–87.

³⁸ We do not have any testimony of this commentary, but De Sacy (1810), 480, formulates a hypothesis. He believes it may be possible that some words have been omitted from Ibn Abī Ušaybiʿa's text and that ʿAbd al-Laṭīf originally wrote *wa-šarḥ Šarīf ʿUmar wa-šarḥ Ibn Ḥamza* (the commentary by ʿUmar and that by Ibn Ḥamza). In fact of the many commentaries on the *Kitāb al-lumaʿ* registered are those by Abū l-Barakāt ʿUmar ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Kūfī al-Alawī [d. 1135 c.; Sezgin (1984), IX.175] and by Maḥmūd ibn Ḥamza ibn Naṣr al-Kirmānī [Sezgin (1984), IX.175].

³⁹ Cf. Sezgin (1984), IX.175.

⁴⁰ The *Adab al-kātib* or *Adab al-kuttāb* or *Kitāb al-kuttāb* or *Ādāb al-katāba* by Ibn Qutayba is an important handbook of spelling and morphology for secretaries in four books (cf. al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbāʿ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabāʿ*, 128. 1–17 Amer; Sezgin (1984), IX.154–158). The *Correction of the Language* (*Taqwīm al-lisān*) is the third book of the *Adab al-kātib*. The titles *Muškil al-Qurʾān* and *Ġarīb al-Qurʾān* designate two texts by the same author regarding philology of the *Koran*: in the first the author seeks to clarify variant readings and hence interpretations, and in the second he offers an analysis of linguistic, syntactic, or lexical peculiarities of the sacred text [Sezgin (1984), IX.158; Sezgin (1982), VIII.161–165].

I then devoted myself to the treatise *al-Īdāh* by Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī⁴¹ and I learnt it by heart over many months, I applied myself constantly to the study of its commentaries and I followed the complete succession of them, until I had studied it in depth, and I summarized what the commentaries said. As far as the treatise *al-Takmila*⁴² is concerned, I learnt it by heart in a few days, a quire a day. I studied entire treatises and their compendia and I applied myself constantly to the *al-Muqtaḍab* of al-Mubarrad⁴³ and the treatise by Ibn Durustawayh.⁴⁴

In the meantime I had not neglected my study of *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* under the guidance of our master Ibn Faḍlān⁴⁵ in the *Dār al-Dahab*,

⁴¹ Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī, *al-Īdāh al-‘aḍudī* Farḥūd (1969). Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Abān al-Fārisī (d. 987) was a well-known master of *qiyās* [i.e. reasoning by analogy] of the tenth century, the golden age of grammatical studies in Baghdad. Among his masters was Ibn al-Sarrāḡ and among his followers Ibn Ğinnī. Cf. al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā’*, 187.15–189.6 Amer; Sezgin (1984), IX.101–110, in particular 102.

⁴² Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī, *al-Takmila* Farḥūd (1981). Cf. al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā’*, 187.15–189.6 Amer; Sezgin (1984), IX.102–103. Some biographers list the *Takmila* and the *Īdāh al-‘aḍudī* as separate works, al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt ‘alā anbāh, al-nuḥāt*, 1.274 Ibrāhīm, suggests that the *Takmila* was an integration of the *Īdāh*. The *Takmila* was famous for being particularly difficult and in fact the following anecdote circulated regarding it: reading the *Īdāh al-‘aḍudī* by al-Fārisī the Buyid governor ‘Aḍud al-Dawla had found it to be too short and had told the author that he had learnt nothing he did not know before from the reading of his text; the book was fine for boys at most. So al-Fārisī wrote the *Integration (al-Takmila)* and presented it to the governor who after having read it said: “Our master has become angry and has written a work unintelligible to the whole world including himself”. This perhaps explains ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s high opinion of himself – a characteristic trait of his personality – claiming to have studied this treatise in a few days.

⁴³ This is the famous compendium in which Abū l-Abbās al-Mubarrad (826–898) summarises the *Kitāb fi l-naḥw* by Sibawayh (d. 793) and with which he brought to Baghdad (cf. above note 14) the grammar of the school of Baṣra (Abū l-Abbās al-Mubarrad, *Kitāb al-Muqtaḍab* ‘Uḍayma (1963–68). Il *Kitāb fi l-naḥw* is a large and asystematic collection of particular questions concerning morphology (*ṣarf*), grammar, and syntax (*naḥw*) and thus reflects the lively school debates from which it derives. Cf. al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā’*, 132.1–138.17 Amer; Sezgin (1984), IX.82–85.

⁴⁴ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ġa’far ibn Durustawayh (d. 956–7) was the follower of both the master al-Mubarrad exponent in Baghdad of the grammatical current of the school of Baṣra – indeed he wrote a commentary on al-Mubarrad’s *Muqtaḍab* (quoted in the previous note) – and of Ta’lab exponent in Baghdad of the grammatical current of the school of Kūfa. Unfortunately most of his works have been lost except the *Treatise of the Secretaries (Kitāb al-Kuttāb)*, a work which intended to give a series of rules for those who practised the profession of secretary. Cf. al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā’*, 171.1–172.9 Amer; Sezgin (1984), IX.96–98. Toorawa (2004), 98, suggests that the mention simply of the *Kitāb* might refer to the *Kitāb al-Kuttāb*, but a case might be made for the *Kitāb al-ḥadāyā* because of its similarity to works by al-Fārisī and Ibn Ğinnī.

⁴⁵ Ibn Faḍlān, Ġamal al-Dīn Abū l-Qāsim Yaḥyā ibn ‘Alī ibn Hibat Allāh al-Allāma al-Baḡdādī (d. 1121–1199). Cf. Toorawa (2004), 94; Ephrat (2000), 109: He studied *fiqh* from Abū Maṣṣūr ibn al-Razzāz in Baghdad [cf. Ephrat (2000), 121–122, 172] and from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, a disciple of al-Ġazālī in Nišāpūr. He studied *ḥadīth* under Ismā‘īl ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Amr al-Samarqandī, Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir, and Abū l-Karam Ibn al-Suhrawardī. He is described by his biographers as an outstanding legal scholar, versed in the *ḥilāf* (divergence of the law) and dialectic, and as the leader of the Šāfi‘īs in Iraq. According to

which is the *madrasa* on the second floor⁴⁶ founded by Faḥr al-Dawla ibn al-Muṭṭalib.

He goes on, “The master Kamāl al-Dīn had written one hundred and thirty treatises: most of these on grammar (*naḥw*), some on *fiqh*, the foundations of theology and Islamic law (*uṣūl al-dīn* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*), and some on mysticism and asceticism (*taṣawwuf* and *zuhd*). I managed to learn many of his writings by listening to them, reading them, and memorising them. He then started two lengthy texts, one on language and the other on *fiqh*, and they were not too much for him despite their length. Under his guidance I learnt by heart a part of the *Kitāb Sibawayh*⁴⁷ and I applied myself with ardour to the *al-Muqtaḍab*⁴⁸ until I knew it in depth. After the death of the master, I was totally free to devote myself to the *Kitāb Sibawayh* and to the commentary on it written by al-Sīrāfi.⁴⁹

Then I studied many texts under the guidance of ‘Ubayd al-Karḥī⁵⁰ and among these the *Kitāb al-Uṣūl* by Ibn al-Sarrāġ,⁵¹ the copy which is found in the *waqf* of Ibn al-Ḥaššāb in the *Ribāṭ al-Mā’mūniyya*.⁵² Under his guidance

Toorawa (2004), 94, Ibn Faḍlān eventually became the professor of the Ṣāfiī law at the *Mustanṣiriyya madrasa* in Baghdad. But the *Mustanṣiriyya madrasa* was founded only in 1233 after Ibn Faḍlān's death.

⁴⁶ It seems that the term *mu‘allaqa*, in the way that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf uses it, designates a room on the second floor of a building, that is to say “elevated”: cf. below note 73.

⁴⁷ The *Kitāb Sibawayh* is considered to be the principal textbook of Arabic grammar. We know practically nothing of Sibawayh (d. between 793 and 796–97): he died too young and too far away from the major cultural centres of Iraq to leave any trace of himself in the bi-bibliographical works, but an infinite number of anecdotes sprang up around him. We know that he was born in Baydā’ (Šīrāz) from Persian parents, that he studied in Baṣra for some time, probably under the guidance of the masters ‘Isā ibn ‘Umar, Yūnus, and al-Ḥalīl, and that he died at an age of between thirty-two and forty. His *Kitāb* has been the object of detailed study: opinions diverge because some scholars maintain the Greek origin of Arabic grammar, while others hold an indigenous origin linked to the vocabulary and methods of jurisprudence (*fiqh*): cf. Carter (1972), 69–97. As regards the contents of the *Kitāb*, its construction, information on its composition, the manuscripts, editions, commentaries, and a reference bibliography, see the exhaustive information provided by Carter (1997), IX.524–531; Sezgin (1984), IX.51–63. Cf. also al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā’*, 35.10–39.12 Amer.

⁴⁸ Cf. above, notes 14 and 43.

⁴⁹ This is the *Commentary on the Book of Sibawayh* (*Šarḥ Kitāb Sibawayh*) by Abū Sa‘īd al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Sīrāfi, the well-known grammarian of Baṣra who died in 979 [al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā’*, 183.14–184.19 Amer; Sezgin (1984), IX.59; 98–101]. Regarding this commentary, al-Anbārī says that no one ever managed to explain the *Kitāb Sibawayh* better than al-Sīrāfi (Amer 184.1–2).

⁵⁰ On Abū ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad al-Karḥī cf. De Sacy (1810), 482.

⁵¹ Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Sarī, Ibn al-Sarrāġ, *Al-Uṣūl al-kabīr* al-Fatī. Ibn al-Sarrāġ (d. 928/29) was the youngest and the favourite pupil of al-Mubarrad. At first he devoted himself to the study of logic and music, and later studied grammar. He taught grammar in Baghdad and had among his pupils Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī. In the treatise *al-Uṣūl al-kabīr* there is a systematic exposition of the logic at the basis of grammatical rules. Cf. al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt ‘alā anbāh al-nuḥāt*, III. 145.5–50 Ibrāhīm; al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā’*, 150.1–14 Amer; Brockelmann (1943), I.114; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I.174; Sezgin (1984), IX.82–85.

⁵² The *Ribāṭ al-Mā’mūniyya* contained an important library; one of its collections was donated by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥaššāb (d. 1171), master of *ḥadīth*, man of letters,

I studied the law of succession and the prosody of Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb al-Tabrīzī⁵³ who was part of the class of pupils of Ibn Ṣāḡarī,⁵⁴ and I listened to Ibn al-Ḥaṣṣāb's reading of the *Ma'ānī (l-Qur'ān)* by al-Zaḡḡaḡ,⁵⁵ <studied by him in turn> under the guidance of the learned woman Šuhda bint al-Ibarī.⁵⁶ I heard him chant the *ḥadīṭ* litany, "the merciful has mercy on the merciful, be merciful to those who are on the earth and he will be merciful with you in heaven".

Muwaffaq al-Dīn al-Baḡdādī recounts, moreover, that among the masters from whom he benefited, as he declared, was the son of Amīn al-Dawla Ibn al-Tilmīd,⁵⁷ and he exaggerated and exceeded in his description of him above all because of his many affinities with the Iraqīs;⁵⁸ if there hadn't been the son of Amīn al-Dawla he would not have joined this faction, nor been close to it.

And he recounts, "A man came to Baghdad from the *Maḡrib*, tall, dressed like a *Šūfī*; he had prestige and eloquence, with a pleasant appearance, the air of a religious man, and looked like a traveller; those who saw him before getting to know him well were influenced by his appearance; he was known as Ibn Nā'ilī⁵⁹ and he claimed to be among the descendents of the Almoravid and to have left the *Maḡrib* when 'Abd al-Mu'min⁶⁰ took possession of it.

philologist, grammarian, mathematician, expert in *farā'id* (hereditary law) and *nasab* (genealogy) who was a master of 'Abd al-Laṭīf. Cf. below 177, Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I.493–94; Eche (1967), 186–189.

⁵³ This is the work *al-Kāfi fi l-arūd wa-l-qawāfi* by Abū Zakariyyā' Yaḥyā ibn 'Alī al-Šaybānī, Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb al-Tabrīzī, who numbers among his works a commentary on the *Luma'* and commentaries on the poetry of al-Mutanabbī, of Abū Tammām, of the *Ḥamāsāt* and of al-Ma'arrī's *Saqṭ al-zand*: cf. De Sacy (1810), 482; Brockelmann (1943), I.331–332; Toorawa (2004), 98–99.

⁵⁴ On Abū l-Sa'ādā Hibat Allāh ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Šāḡarī see al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā' fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā'*, 238.17–240.20 Amer; Brockelmann (1943), I.332; suppl. I.492–493.

⁵⁵ For Iṣḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-Sarī ibn Sahl al-Zaḡḡaḡ and his *Meaning of the Koran (Ma'ānī l-Qur'ān)* see al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā' fi ṭabaqāt al-udabā'*, 147.7–148.18 Amer; Brockelmann (1943), I.111–112; suppl. I. 170; Sezgin (1967) I. 49.

⁵⁶ Faḥr al-nisā' (lit. the pride of womanhood) Šuhda bint Abī Naṣr Aḥmad ibn al-Faraḡ ibn 'Amrū al-Ibarī (d. 1178), is described by biographers as the calligrapher, the great authority on *ḥadīṭ*; she lectured publicly to large audiences on literature, rhetoric and poetry. It was an important credential to have studied with her and thus many people claimed falsely to have done so: cf. De Sacy (1810), 483; Shabbir Khan (1996), 105; Heath (2004), 1178.

⁵⁷ See the passage in the autobiography where 'Abd al-Laṭīf speaks of Raḍī al-Dawla Abū Naṣr (d. ca. 1182), son of the well-known doctor Amīn al-Dawla Ibn al-Tilmīd. 'Abd al-Laṭīf says that he never met Amīn al-Dawla Ibn al-Tilmīd who wrote so many books, but that whenever he speaks about a person called Ibn al-Tilmīd, he means the son. This teacher-student relationship, probably on medical subjects, is highlighted also by Ibn Ḥallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, VI.77 'Abbās. Cf. Kahl (2007), 9 note 26; Joosse (2011), 29 note 15.

⁵⁸ At the beginning of his biography Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a stresses 'Abd al-Laṭīf's adversion to the learned men of Persia and their works, with particular reference to Avicenna (cf. 103).

⁵⁹ This scholar is quoted as Ibn Tātālī by Wiedemann (1907), 80–82, and as Ibn Nā'ilī by Makdisi (1981), 86. The name Ibn Nā'ilī is based on the figure of Avicenna's philosophy teacher, namely al-Nātīlī, who was also a rather useless teacher. Cf. Gohlman (1974), 21–23.

⁶⁰ This is the Almohad sovereign 'Abd al-Mu'min (d. 1163).

When he settled in Baghdad many of the greatest and most well-known figures associated themselves with him and al-Raḍī al-Qazwīnī⁶¹ and the master of masters Ibn Sakīna⁶² presented themselves to him. I was one of those who presented themselves to him; he taught me the *Muqaddima al-hisāb*⁶³ and the *Muqaddima fī l-naḥw* by Ibn Bābašād.⁶⁴ Ibn Nā'īlī had a singular method of teaching. Those who presented themselves to him thought that Ibn Nā'īlī was very learned, but he was in reality nothing more than a rather eccentric man. He had, however, intensely studied books of alchemy and talismans and disciplines of this type. He devoted himself to the writings of Ġābir⁶⁵ till he had finished them and to the books of Ibn Waḥšiyya.⁶⁶ He attracted attention with his appearance, his eloquence, and his ability to influence others. He fills my heart with the desire to know all those disciplines. He joined the Imām al-Nāšir li-Dīn Allāh and he charmed him.

Then he set off again on his journey, and I began to devote myself to study, I tried to bring it to completion seriously and diligently, I gave up sleep and pleasures and I devoted myself to the works of al-Ġazālī, that is, to the treatises *Maqāšid*, *Mi'yār*, *Mizān* and *Miḥakk al-naẓar*.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Raḍī al-Dīn is an honorific title common to many famous people. In this case it refers perhaps to the learned šafī'ī Raḍī l-Dīn Abū l-Ḥayr Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl al-Ṭaliqānī al-Qazwīnī, who died in 1194; cf. De Sacy (1810), 483; Toorawa (2004), 99, confirms this identification and on the base of Ibn al-Imād's report wrote that Raḍī al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī taught in the *Nizāmiyya madrasa*, that he was proficient in dialectic, disputation, *uṣūl*, exegesis and sermons.

⁶² Toorawa (2004), 99; Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Abū Aḥmad 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn al-Amīn al-Baġdādī (d. 1210) studied Arabic philology under Ibn al-Ḥaššāb and disputation and dialectic under Abū Maṣṣūr al-Razzāz.

⁶³ In Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II. 203.31 Müller, we find written *muqaddima al-hisāb* or introduction to arithmetic; De Sacy (1810), 484, maintained he could read *muqaddima al-Ḥaššāb*, that is the introduction by Ibn Ḥaššāb (cf. note 52), who would accordingly have written a grammatical work. Toorawa (2004), 99: this work could be the commentary on *al-Muqaddima al-wazūriyya fī l-naḥw* by the vizier Ibn Hubayra (d. 1165).

⁶⁴ Ṭāhir ibn Aḥmad ibn Bābašād (d. 1077), the most famous Egyptian grammarian of his time, was the author of an *Introduction to Grammar (Muqaddima fī l-Naḥw)*, a textbook for the study of grammar (al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-udabā'*, 212.12–213.2 Amer; cf. Brockelmann (1943), I.365; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 529; Sezgin (1984), IX.84; 89–90; 239). Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, II.386.8 'Abbās, records among the works of 'Abd al-Laṭīf a *Commentary on the Muqaddima of Ibn Bābašād*.

⁶⁵ On the legendary alchemist Ġābir ibn Ḥayyān cf. the very lengthy entry by Sezgin (1971), IV.132–269. On the alchemic *corpus* of (or attributed to) Ġābir ibn Ḥayyān cf. P. Kraus (1942–43); cf. also Gannagé (1998), 35–86.

⁶⁶ On Ibn Waḥšiyya cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I.430–431; Sezgin (1971), IV. 282–283.

⁶⁷ The first work refers to the *Intentions of the Philosophers (Maqāšid al-falāsifa)* which was probably written by al-Ġazālī during the period of his teaching at the *Nizāmiyya* (1091–1095). Janssens (1986) has demonstrated that it is an Arabic adaptation of the parts on logics, metaphysics, and natural sciences of Avicenna's Persian work *Philosophy for 'Alā' al-Dawla*. Earlier scholar, for example Bouyges (1959), 23–24, assumed that the *Intentions of the Philosophers* constituted a preparatory study to the *Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahāfut al-falāsifa)* and even a trilogy together with the treatise on logic *The Measure of Science in the Art of Logic (Mi'yār al-'ilm fī fann al-mantiq)*, mentioned here by 'Abd al-Laṭīf, and the *Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahāfut al-falāsifa)*. Al-Ġazālī would have in fact

Then I turned to the books of Ibn Sīnā, from the small to the large works: I learnt the *Kitāb al-Nağāt* by heart and transcribed the *Šifā*⁶⁸ and studied it. I then summarised the *Kitāb al-Taḥsīl* by Bahmanyār,⁶⁹ a pupil of Ibn Sīnā.

I transcribed and studied many books by Ġābir ibn Ḥayyān the sūfī and Ibn Waḥšīyya, and I worked on the practise of this false art and inconclusive and empty experiments.⁷⁰ It was above all Ibn Sīnā who led me astray with his book on the art with which he supposed to complete his philosophy, an art that in general merely increases one's contempt for his work".

In the course of his education 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Bağdādī developed two strong aversions: the first, as we have seen, towards Avicenna and his writings; the second, as we shall see in his autobiography, and in the paragraph devoted to his own production,⁷¹ towards alchemy, which he had studied, as Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a tells us, but had then abandoned, not considering it to be a scientific discipline, but an irrational practice.⁷²

From this point onwards the second phase in the life of 'Abd al-Laṭīf is presented, which we could call the period of his travels.⁷³ At the age of

initially intended to write a treatise on logic, *The Measure of Science*, with a double intention in dialectic, that is, to master the philosophers' techniques of argumentation in order to confute them with their own tools, and to use logic as a tool in juridical and theological discussions: cf. Marmura (1975), 100–11; Gutas (1993), 58–59. Later, in the *Intentions of the Philosophers*, he would set out the doctrines of the philosophers precisely and without trace of any negative judgement; finally, in his *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, completed around 1095, al-Ġazālī would demonstrate that the doctrines of the philosophers contradicted those of Sunni Islam and therefore had to be confuted. Against this thesis Janssens (2003a), 43–45 and Griffel (2009), 9–10 have demonstrated that the *Incoherence of the Philosophers* and the *Intentions of the Philosophers* use different terminologies and that not only the *Intentions* may have been written as an autonomous text, but even that the *Intentions* may have been composed after the *Incoherence*. In fact, the only parts of the *Intentions*, such as the introduction and its brief *explicit*, which create a connection to the refutation in the *Incoherence* were almost certainly written after the publication of the *Incoherence*. 'Abd al-Laṭīf studied two other works by al-Ġazālī: the *Criterion of Action (Mizān al-'amal)* on Ethics and the *Touchstone of Reasoning in Logic (Miḥakk al-naẓar fī al-mantiq)*. 'Abd al-Laṭīf did not find in these texts al-Ġazālī's refutation of philosophy [cf. Griffel (2000)], but a sort of introduction to it and after these readings he devoted himself to the study of Avicenna's philosophy.

⁶⁸ Cf. above chapter I, note 402.

⁶⁹ On Bahmanyār ibn al-Marzubān's revision of Avicenna's philosophy, and in particular of Avicenna's Metaphysics, in the *Kitāb al-Taḥsīl* cf. Janssens (2007), 99–117.

⁷⁰ Cf. above notes 65 and 66.

⁷¹ Cf. below 197–208.

⁷² Cf. below, 203–204.

⁷³ For the value of "travelling" scholar before 'Abd al-Laṭīf's age cf. Ephrat (2000), 5–6: "The high value ascribed to the acquisition of knowledge in Islamic tradition, specially religious education, and the assumption that personal qualities are strictly connected to knowledge, continued to stimulate the evolution of Islamic scholarship. During what Franz Rosenthal called the "manuscript age" (from about the late ninth century), Muslim scholars in the various fields of learning set forth principles for the preservation of books,

twenty-eight, in 585/1190, he began his long pilgrimage in the search for a master with whom he could resolve the problems created by his reading of the works of Avicenna and those on alchemy. This search, as we will see, was to bring him to Cairo and to the discovery there of Aristotle, his works, and the peripatetic tradition.

He narrates furthermore: "In 585 (1189), since no one was left in Baghdad able to capture my heart, no one who could satisfy me and clarify what remained ambiguous for me, I came to Mosul, but I did not find what I desired there; I only found Kamāl ibn Yūnus,⁷⁴ excellent in the mathematical sciences and *fiqh*, but lacking in the other parts of knowledge. His mind and his time was in fact absorbed by his passion for alchemy and its practise until he reached the point of no longer giving importance to anything outside it.

A numerous group gathered around me and teaching posts were offered to me; from them I chose the *madrasa* of Ibn Muḥāğir on the second floor⁷⁵ and the *Dār al-Ḥadīṭ* which was located beneath it. I stayed in Mosul for a year, always working incessantly day and night. The people of Mosul said they had never seen anyone before me who was so virtuous and gifted both as to the breadth of my memory, mental agility, and seriousness.

I heard people saying great things about Šihāb al-Suhrawardī,⁷⁶ the philosopher: people were convinced he was more important than any of the

copying, citations, commentary, style, handwriting, and rules of editing and translation. [...] Islamic learning during the eleventh and twelfth centuries was still imparted in a variety of study circles long after the foundation of cultural institutions for the preservation and propagation of accepted "knowledge". Nor did the old manner of learning wandering from one place to another, fade from the Muslim world. Although the Islamic domains were ruled by autocratic regimes, political boundaries are vague and open. People and ideas moved freely from one place to another. Indeed, this social and intellectual flexibility assured the constant circulation of ideas, which, in turn, enabled the cultural flowering during the period from the Buyid conquests to the Mongol invasions [...]. But for all the freedom and variety still evident in religious and cultural life, systematic expositions of Islamic thought had become more directed by the twelfth century. The range of knowledge which would have been accepted in earlier centuries was probably narrowed". Cf. Ephrat (2000), 63: "Still, while the student of the period in which madrasas became widespread was probably less travelled than his predecessor, it is also true that travelling in search of learning persisted, at least as a model".

⁷⁴ On Abu l-Faṭḥ Kamāl al-Dīn Mūsā ibn Yūnus al-Mawšili cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I, p. 859, Toorawa (2004), 101, he was born in 551/1156 and studied grammar at the *Nizāmiyya* under Ibn Sa'dūn al-Qurṭubi and Kamāl al-Dīn al-Anbārī. After the death of his father Yūnus al-Mawšili, he taught in the madrasa which probably after him took the name *Kamālīyya*, attached to the mosque of Amīr Zayn al-Dīn in Mosul.

⁷⁵ Cf. note 46.

⁷⁶ Cf. Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Šahrazūri, *Nuzhat al-arwāḥ wa-rawḍat al-afrāḥ fī tāriḥ al-ḥukamā' wa-l-falāsifa*, II.119–43 Ḥūršīd: Šihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī (al-Maqtūl) was born around 1154, probably in the north-western region of Iran. He initially studied philosophy, in particular that of Avicenna, and theology in Marāğa with the master Mağd al-Dīn al-Ġilī. He then studied logic in Isfahan with the master Ḥaḥīr al-Fārisī. In logic, Ḥaḥīr al-Fārisī followed the current of 'Umar ibn Saḥlān al-Šawī. The logic of al-Šawī was notably different from Aristotelian logic: it abandoned the late antique division of the

ancient and modern authors and that his works were superior to those of the Ancients, and I decided to go and look for him.

Then the aid of God descended on me and I asked Ibn Yūnus for some of al-Suhrawardī's works; he also was, in fact, a supporter of them. I came across the treatises *al-Tabwīḥāt*,⁷⁷ *al-Lamḥa*,⁷⁸ and *al-Ma'āriḡ*;⁷⁹ in them I found that which made the ignorance of the people of the time stand out and

Organon into nine treatises in favour of a simpler bipartition into semantics and theory of demonstration. Al-Suhrawardī adopted this model of logic in the organization of his own philosophical system. He travelled much in the north of Syria and in Turkey, where 'Abd al-Laṭīf had intended to go and meet him, and he came into contact with various *sūfī* masters. It was precisely in this period, driven by a dream in which Aristotle had appeared to him, that he rejected the Avicennian Peripatetic philosophy of his youth and took upon himself the task of reviving the philosophical tradition of the Ancients, and in particular Plato's philosophy of the Forms (from which he drew up a metaphorical theory centred around the images of light and vision (*Rep.* V–VIII)). In 1183 he came to Aleppo, where he finished formulating his new philosophical system. These were dramatic years for Syria which, nine years earlier, had fallen into the hands of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ibn Ayyūb (Saladin) and now found itself governed by his son, prince al-Malik al-Zāhir, little more than a boy. Very soon the young prince himself became his devoted follower. The influence al-Suhrawardī had over him provoked the jealousy of the jurists of the city, who convinced Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ibn Ayyūb in person to condemn al-Suhrawardī to death.

⁷⁷ The philosophy of illumination (*Ḥikmat al-Isrāq*) is presented by al-Suhrawardī in four fundamental works, *Intimations* (*al-Tabwīḥāt*), *Apposites* (*al-Muqāwamāt*), *Paths and Havens* (*al-Mašārī' wa-l-muṭārahāt*), and *The Philosophy of Illumination* (*Ḥikmat al-Isrāq*). The metaphysical sections of the first three works are edited in Corbin (1945); the *Intimations* is edited in Ḥabībī (2009); *The Philosophy of Illumination* is edited in Corbin (1945) and Walbridge–Ziai (1999). In the construction of his philosophy al-Suhrawardī responded initially to criticism of the universal validity of Aristotelian scientific methodology and of the Islamic Peripatetics like Avicenna and proposed going back to an ancient inheritance of wisdom which included Platonic philosophy, Persian wisdom, and hermeticism. Al-Suhrawardī intended to create a new philosophical system, capable of harmonising an intuitive type of knowledge (*al-ḥikma al-dawqīyya*) with a deductive type (*al-ḥikma al-baḥṭīyya*); he managed to formulate an epistemological theory aimed at describing intuitive knowledge in a scientific way. He called this theory "knowledge by presence" (*al-ilm al-ḥudūrī*): it gave primacy to a modality of atemporal, immediate, and pre-inferential knowledge, which, in modern terms, is an intuitive, non-propositional knowledge, antecedent to the differentiation of subject and object. This type of knowledge is recognised as having a fundamental epistemological role first of all in sensation, but also on a logical level: al-Suhrawardī rejected the Aristotelian theory of the essential definition, maintaining that essences could be known only through direct knowledge. Finally, the theory of "knowledge by presence" held an equally fundamental epistemological role in the mystical awareness of supersensible entities defined by al-Suhrawardī as "immaterial lights" and it was called on to resolve the well-known problem of God's knowledge of particulars. This problem had been generated in *falsafa* because of the introduction of the Aristotelian notion of the Immobile Prime Mover within a theological perspective: it required the first principle to have knowledge of the particulars of the world in order to be able to be provident. For a detailed analysis of the contents of the Philosophy of Illumination cf. Ziai (1990).

⁷⁸ *Lamḥa*, (plur. *lamaḥāt*). *The Glimmer* (*Kitāb al-Lamaḥāt*) is described by al-Suhrawardī as a compendium of the most important elements of logic, physics, and metaphysics: Ma'lūf (1969) 57.

⁷⁹ *Mī'rāḡ* (plur. *Ma'āriḡ*). On the uncertain question of the attribution of *The Ascending Steps* (*Kitāb al-Ma'āriḡ*) to al-Suhrawardī cf. Corbin (1945), 5, note 7.

I realized that many of my observations, which I was not yet satisfied with, were in reality superior to the discourse of that imbecile. In the course of his discourse he placed separated letters and convinced those like him that they were to be considered divine signs”.

Then he recounts: “When I went to Damascus,⁸⁰ I found there a considerable number of notables from Baghdad and the surrounding region that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s generosity and successes brought together,⁸¹ among them there was Ġamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, son of the master Abū l-Naġīb;⁸² there was also someone from the family of *Raʿīs al-ruʿasāʾ*;⁸³ the secretary Ibn Ṭalḥah,⁸⁴ someone from the family of Ibn Ġahīr,⁸⁵ that of the minister Ibn al-Aṭṭār,⁸⁶ who had been killed, and that of the vizier Ibn Hubayra.⁸⁷ I joined the grammarian al-Kindī al-Baġdādī⁸⁸ and many disputes took place between us. He was a brilliant master, wise, stimulating, and enjoyed the

⁸⁰ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf went to Damascus after February 1190, when he was 28 years old: Toorawa (2004a), 64.

⁸¹ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf lists here a series of prominent families which in the past had produced ministers and important politicians and that now, in decline, had come to Damascus, attracted by the generosity and the fame of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.

⁸² Ġamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ibn Labbād (the same sobriquet of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf), son of the master Abū l-Naġīb (cf. above note 25), was an expert in speculative theology, philosophy, medicine and astrology: cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*, 686 note 3 Nizār Riḏā.

⁸³ The honorific title *Raʿīs al-ruʿasāʾ* was given to Abū l-Qāsim ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, ‘Abbāsīd Vizier from 1045 to 1058, the year of his death. His great-great nephew, Aḏud al-Dīn Abū l-Faraġ, Vizier of the Caliph al-Mustaḏīr (r. 1170–1180) was called *Ibn Raʿīs al-ruʿasāʾ*. Hence ‘Abd al-Laṭīf probably met someone of his family: cf. De Sacy (1810), 478.

⁸⁴ Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Ṭābit ibn Ṭalḥah was educated in Nišāpūr, then he was a secretary in Damascus to the Ḥāġīb of the Bāb al-Tawbī: cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*, 686 note 4 Nizār Riḏā; Toorawa (2004), 102 note 68.

⁸⁵ The ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs choose four viziers from the *Banū Ġahīr*: the first was active under al-Mustaẓhir (r. 1094–1118) the last under al-Muqtafi (r. 1136–1160) cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*, 686 note 5 Nizār Riḏā; Cahen (1991), II, 384–385.

⁸⁶ Zāhir al-Dīn ibn al-Aṭṭār was the treasurer of the Caliph al-Mustaḏīr (r. 1170–1180). Cf. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s mention of Ibn al-Aṭṭār in al-Ḍahabī in the *Taʾrīḥ al-Islām, Ṭabaqāt 575*, in Cahen (1970), 107.2–5.

⁸⁷ ‘Awn al-Dīn ibn Hubayra (d. 1165) was vizier for sixteen uninterrupted years of the Caliphs al-Muqtafi (r. 1136–1160) and al-Mustanġid (r. 1160–1170): cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl.I, 298, 688–9; Makdisi (1986), III, 802–803.

⁸⁸ This is the *Šayḥ* Tāġ al-Dīn Abū l-Yumn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Kindī al-Baġdādī al-Naḥwī (d. 1216). He studied under Ibn al-Ḥaššāb, Abū Maṣūr al-Ġawālīqī and Ibn Ṣaġari. In Aleppo he traded in old clothes. Then he met Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s nephew, Amīr al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb and accompanied him to Egypt where he was able to avail himself of the great libraries and collected and studied many works: cf. Toorawa (2004) 102. al-Kindī al-Baġdādī’s precious collection of books was donated to the Umayyad mosque in Damascus by his freed slave Yāqūt (Yaʿqūb ibn ‘Abd Allāh, d. 1229). The collection comprised 761 volumes divided into 140 works on the Koranic sciences, 19 on *ḥadīth*, 39 on *fiqh*, 143 on lexicography, 122 on poetry, 175 on grammar and morphology, and 123 on various subjects. This collection was soon dispersed, yet the information we have on it gives us an idea of the range of competence of the master al-Kindī al-Baġdādī: cf. Ibn Šākīr al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, II, 385.2–3 ‘Abbās; Eche (1967), 206–207.

favour of the sultan, but he was quite vain and offensive to his company. Discussions took place between us and God – may He be exalted – allowed me to get the best of him in many questions. Later I no longer gave any importance to him and he was offended because of my lack of regard for him, even more than people were offended by him.

I still worked in Damascus on a certain number of writings and in particular on the *Ġarīb al-Ḥadīṭ al-kabīr*:⁸⁹ in it I collected the *Ġarīb* by Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām,⁹⁰ the *Ġarīb* by Ibn Qutayba,⁹¹ and the *Ġarīb* by al-Ḥaṭṭābī;⁹² I had already started it in Mosul, and I worked on it by making a compendium which I entitled *al-Muġarrad*.⁹³ I then wrote the *Kitāb al-Wādiḥa fī l-rāb al-Fātiḥa*⁹⁴ which was about twenty quires and the *Kitāb al-Alif wa-l-Lām*,⁹⁵ the *Kitāb Rubba*⁹⁶ and a book on essential substance and qualities in the language of theologians.⁹⁷ With this latter I tried to set out a confutation of al-Kindī.

In Damascus I found again the master ‘Abd Allāh ibn Nā’ilī⁹⁸ who lived in the Western minaret. A crowd followed him and the people were divided over him into two groups, one favourable and one against. The *ḥaṭīb al-Dawla’ī*,⁹⁹ who enjoyed dignity and honour among the most notable people, was against him.

Later Ibn Nā’ilī had a moment of confusion; in which he gave his own adversary some pretexts to use against him: he began, in fact, to speak about alchemy and philosophy which made the people’s contempt grow. I encountered him and he began to question me on certain activities which I held to be low and insignificant, thought he, unlike me, attributed great importance to them, and devoted several writings to them. I forced him to come out into the open and I found that he was not as I had thought, and I formed a bad

⁸⁹ Cf. Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, II, 386.6 ‘Abbās.

⁹⁰ On the *Ġarīb al-muṣannaf* by Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām ibn Miskīn (ca.773-ca.837) cf. Sezgin (1982), VIII, 81–87 and in particular 82–83, who however does not quote this collection by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf.

⁹¹ Cf. above note 40.

⁹² On the *Ġarīb al-Ḥadīṭ* by Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥaṭṭābī (931–998) among whose sources we can recognize the *Ġarīb* by Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (cf. above note 90) cf. Sezgin (1967), I, 210–211; Sezgin, (1982), VIII, 208.

⁹³ Cf. Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, II, 386.6 ‘Abbās, where we find among the works attributed to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf “*Ġarīb al-Ḥadīṭ wa-l-muġarrad min-hu*”; Brockelmann, (1937), suppl. I, 881.

⁹⁴ Cf. Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, II, 386.6–7 ‘Abbās; this would seem to be a treatise of grammatical analysis on the *Opening sura*, the first of the Koran.

⁹⁵ Cf. Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, II, 386.7 ‘Abbās; this would seem to be a treatise on the use of the article *al-* made up precisely of the two letters *Alif* and *Lām*.

⁹⁶ This should be a grammatical treatise on the particle *rubba* (cf. Wright [1967], II, 214–216).

⁹⁷ Cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, II, 211.5 Müller; 693.28 Nizār Riḍā.

⁹⁸ Cf. above note 59.

⁹⁹ Cf. Toorawa (2004), 102: This is Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Zayd al-Dawla’ī (d. 1202), who studied *fiqh* under al-Karḥī and taught in the *Ġazālīyya*: Ibn al-Imād, *Šaḍarāt al-ḍahab fī aḥbār man ḍahab* (1931), IV, 336.

opinion of him and his method. I later held some discussions with him on the sciences and I discovered that he commanded a very negligible part of them indeed. One day I said to him, “If you had devoted to some of the traditional juridical or rational sciences the time that you have wasted in your research in the Craft (*scil.* Alchemy), you would now be the unequalled master of your age, a blessed man for the rest of your life. This alchemy nonsense simply does not have what you are looking for”.

I then took an example from his condition and was restrained because of his errors: *the happy man is he who learns from others*. I therefore took flight, yet not with unfurled wings.¹⁰⁰ Then Ibn Nā’ili went to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn near Acre to complain to him about the *ḥaṭīb* al-Dawla’i, but he fell ill, and was taken to hospital where he died. Al-Mu’tamid, the commander of the military detachment of Damascus, took his books because he was bewitched by the Craft.

I then went to Jerusalem, and then to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn near Acre.¹⁰¹ I met Bahā’ al-Dīn ibn Ṣaddād,¹⁰² who at that time was judge of the army. He was already aware of the fame I enjoyed in Mosul and he rejoiced with me and came to me. He said, “Let us go to meet the secretary ‘Imād al-Dīn,¹⁰³ let us go to him”. His tent was near Bahā’ al-Dīn’s tent. I found him writing a letter in *tuluṭ*¹⁰⁴ characters to the administrative office (*dīwān*) of al-‘Azīz¹⁰⁵ without drawing up a rough draft. This – he said – is a letter to your hometown. Then he stayed with me to discuss several questions regarding the science of dialectic theology (*kalām*). In the end he said, “These questions force us to go to al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil,¹⁰⁶ so let us go to him”.

¹⁰⁰ The flight that ‘Abd al-Latīf’s talking of here is the initial moment of his progressive detachment from the study and practise of the craft of alchemy, which at this moment however he had not yet wholly fulfilled.

¹⁰¹ ‘Abd al-Latīf went to Jerusalem after 6th April, 1191, then between 4th June and 12th June, 1191 he went to Acre to meet Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn: Toorawa (2004a), 64.

¹⁰² Abū l-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf ibn Rāfi’ al-Asadī al-Mawṣilī Bahā’ al-Dīn ibn Ṣaddād (1145–1234) was the biographer of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and *qāḍī* of the army and the city of Jerusalem, and, after the death of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, he was counsellor to his sons: cf. Brockelmann (1943), I. 316–317; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 549–350. On the biography of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, written by Bahā’ al-Dīn ibn Ṣaddād, entitled *al-Nawādir al-sultāniyya wa-l-maḥāsīn al-Yūsufiyya* or *Sīrat Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn*, al-Ṣayyāl (1964); Richards (2001); cf. Gibb, (1950), 58–72.

¹⁰³ On ‘Imād al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1201) well-known historian, *kātib* for the Sultan Nūr al-Dīn, and finally chronicler of the deeds of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn cf. Brockelmann (1943), I. 314–315; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 548–349; Rabbat (1997), 267–287.

¹⁰⁴ I.e. a particularly ornate character of Arabic calligraphy.

¹⁰⁵ The son of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, al-Malik al-‘Azīz who, on the death of his father (589/1193), was to inherit rule over Egypt. ‘Abd al-Latīf says of him that he was a young man of pleasant appearance, with singular qualities, strong, courageous, and prudent, and recounts that he lived a temperate and active life. He also stresses that he was extremely generous and not tied to riches so that he gave up using the state treasure and demanding legacies and properties. ‘Abd al-Latīf finally recounts an anecdote to stress the temperate nature and the modesty of the young al-Malik al-‘Azīz (cf. al-Dahabī in the *Ta’rīḥ al-Islām*, *Ṭabaqāt* 595, in Cahen (1970), 109.13–19).

¹⁰⁶ On Muḥyi l-Dīn Abū ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Alī al-Laḥmī al-Baysānī al-Asqalānī al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, well-known secretary of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and his adviser in questions of fiscal

I saw a frail master all skin and bones and heart. He was simultaneously writing and dictating; his face and his lips moved about in all sorts of ways due to the strength and the care which he used in pronouncing his discourse and it seemed that he was writing with all the organs of his body. Al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil questioned me on two grammatical difficulties of the Koran.¹⁰⁷ Firstly, in the passage in which it says, “*If then they arrive thither, and its gates are opened and its keepers will say*”, where is the apodosis of the protasis introduced by “*if*” (*idā*)?¹⁰⁸ Secondly, in the passage in which it says “*If only a Koran whereby the mountains were set in motion*” where is the apodosis of the protasis introduced by “*if*” (*law*)?¹⁰⁹ He then questioned me on many other points continuing, in the meantime, to write and dictate. Then he said to me, “Return to Damascus, there you will be recompensed”, but I said that I wanted to go to Egypt. Then he said to me, “The Sultan is worried because of the capture of Acre by the Franks and the massacre of the Muslims there”.¹¹⁰ I said I could not give up going to Egypt; then he wrote and gave me a brief letter for his official in Egypt.

When I entered Cairo his official came to me; it was Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk,¹¹¹ a honourable man of great importance and authority. He gave me accommodation whose defects all repaired. He brought me money and wheat. Then he went to see the heads of the administration of that town and said, “This man is the guest of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, may gifts and benefits come to him from everywhere”. Roughly every ten days al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil’s despatch arrived addressed to the administrative office (*dīwān*) of Egypt for matters regarding the administration of the country and in it one part stressed the recommendation, which I continued to enjoy. I stayed in the mosque of Ḥāḡib Lu’lu’¹¹² – God have mercy on him and receive him –.

and military reform (1135–1200) cf. Brockelmann (1943), I, 315; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I, 549; on the *al-Fāḍilīyya* library he created in Cairo cf. Eche (1967), 249–254.

¹⁰⁷ My translation here is extremely free, but it seems to me the only way to express the problems of Arabic grammar and syntax in these two verses of the Koran.

¹⁰⁸ The verse in question is taken from *sūra* 39 (*The Companies*), verse 73 which literally says “*Then those who feared their Lord shall be driven in companies into Paradise, till, when / if they arrive thither, and its gates are opened, and its keepers will say to them: “Peace be upon you! Well you have fared; enter in, to dwell forever!”*” English Trans. A.J. Arberry. There is a grammatical and syntactical problem: the protasis, which is introduced by *if*, is without an apodosis. The problem emerges more clearly if – as suggested by De Sacy (1810), 489 – we compare this verse with verse 71 of the same *sūra* which literally says “*Then the unbelievers shall be driven in companies into Gehenna till, when they have come thither, then its gates will be opened and its keepers will say to them ...*”.

¹⁰⁹ This second verse is taken from *sūra* 13 (*Thunder*), verse 30 which literally says “*If only a Koran whereby the mountains were set in motion, or the earth were cleft, or the dead were spoken to—nay, but God’s is the affair together ...*” English Trans. A.J. Arberry. The grammatical and syntactical problem lies in the lack of an apodosis to the protasis.

¹¹⁰ Cf. al-Ḍahabī in the *Ta’riḥ al-Islām, al-Hawādīt* 586/190, in Cahen (1970), 108.11–109.6.

¹¹¹ On Abū l-Qāsim Hibat Allāh ibn Abī al-Faḍl Ġa’far ibn al-Mu’tamid Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk, known as al-Qāḍī al-Sa’id (1155–1211) cf. Brockelmann (1943), I, 2, 304; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I, 462.

¹¹² On Ḥāḡib Lu’lu’ Armenian general in the service of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil cf. al-Ḍahabī in the *Ta’riḥ al-Islām, Ṭabaqāt* 598, in Cahen (1970), 115.3–16.

My aim in Egypt was to meet three men: Yāsīn al-Sīmiyā’ī,¹¹³ the *raʿīs* Mūsā ibn Maymūn al-Yahūdī¹¹⁴ and Abū l-Qāsim al-Šārī’ī.¹¹⁵ I managed to meet all three.

¹¹³ Toorawa (2004), 104 claims that the alchemist Yāsīn al-Sīmiyā’ī might be the Abū l-Ṭāhir Ismā’īl ibn Šālīh ibn Yāsīn al-Sā’ī: cf. De Sacy (1810), 489–490. Alternatively Toorawa suggests that he might be Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Irāqī al-Sīmāwī, the author of a book on the so-called cultivation of gold.

¹¹⁴ Naturally ‘Abd al-Latīf is talking here of Moses Maimonides, the famous Jewish philosopher, theologian, and doctor, born in Cordoba in 1135: cf. Brockelmann (1949), II, 644–66, Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I, 893–4; Hayoun (1997²). A Talmudic academy had been set up in Cordoba by the end of the tenth century and the Jewish community was fairly well integrated: Jews held positions of responsibility such as doctors, poets, philosophers, and tax collectors. Maimonides’ father was a judge of the Rabbinical court, a mathematician, and an astronomer. From him Maimonides as a boy learnt to study the *Torah* and the *Talmud*. In 1148, however, Maimonides, still an adolescent, was forced to flee Cordoba with his family due to the Almohad persecution of non-Islamic religious minorities. He spent a certain period of time in the centres of the Maġrib, in Fez in particular. He later moved between Acre, Hebron and Jerusalem in Palestine, but the harsh living conditions in that region at the time of the second crusade forced Maimonides’ family to emigrate again and to settle finally in Egypt, in Fustad, the old part of Cairo. Soon after he arrived in Egypt Maimonides’ father, two sons, and wife died one shortly after another; three years later, his brother David, a merchant of precious stones, perished in a shipwreck off the coast of India. Forced by the strained circumstances in which he and the rest of his family found themselves in Maimonides took up the medical profession under the protection of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil and practised in with growing success until he became the court physician of al-Malik al-Afḍal and Šalāh al-Dīn ibn Ayyūb himself. In 1185 he was appointed *nāgīd* or spokesman and head of the Jewish community in Egypt. Maimonides was in fact an authority on Jewish law. In 1168, at the age of thirty, when he had already been settled in Cairo for two years, he completed his *Commentary on the Mishnah*, which he had begun ten years earlier. Of this work *The Eight Chapters* which introduce the treatise *Avoth*, are of great importance, containing the ethical doctrine of Hebrewism. In 1170 Maimonides wrote the *Book of Precepts* and shortly afterwards his *Letter to Yemen*, motivated by the appearance there of a self-styled prophet announcing that the coming of the Messiah was nigh. In the decade 1170–80 he wrote the *Mishnah Torah* or *Yad Hazakah* (*Repetition of the Torah*), an imposing critical revision and juridical organization of the immense quantity of dogmatic juridical religious material contained in the *Talmud*. In 1190, after having waited many years, he completed his *Morè Nevuchim* or *Guide to the Perplexed*, in Arabic *Dalālat al-Ḥā’irīn*, a fundamental text for Jewish intellectual and spiritual training.

¹¹⁵ On Abū l-Qāsim al-Šārī’ī cf. De Sacy (1810), 490, where the author hypothesizes that Abū l-Qāsim is in reality Abū l-Qāsim Hibat Allāh ibn ‘Alī ibn Mas‘ūd al-Anṣārī al-Ḥazraġī al-Būšayrī (d. 1202), mentioned by Ibn Ḥallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, IV, 338 ‘Abbās, and by al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī aḥbār*, I, 312 Ibrāhīm. He was native of Munastīr, and a renowned and famous master in the science of *ḥadīṭ*. This hypothesis according to De Sacy himself presents two difficulties: in the first place the *laqab* al-Šārī’ī indicates the Cairo quarter where Abū l-Qāsim however never seems to have lived. Secondly he was a well-known master of *ḥadīṭ* and not of philosophy, while ‘Abd al-Latīf both here as follows (cf. below 131–132), and in his autobiography (cf. below 178–180) states that he also learnt Peripatetic philosophy from him. Toorawa (2004), 105 shares the same identification without any difficulty. Dietrich (1964), 110, on the other hand, thinks it may be a person from Baghdad, but he does not clarify his hypothesis any further. I think that the identification with Abū l-Qāsim Hibat Allāh ibn ‘Alī ibn Mas‘ūd al-Anṣārī al-Ḥazraġī al-Būšayrī is correct.

As for Yāsīn I found that he was an astute impostor, a trickster; he recognized al-Šāqānī's knowledge of alchemy, while the latter recognized his, and said that he had performed feats that not even Mūsā ibn 'Imrān (i.e. the biblical Moses) had managed to perform. He said moreover, that he could make gold coins as he liked, in the quantity and the coinage that he wished. Finally he said that he could make the waters of the Nile into a curtain, so that he could live there and his companions underneath. And he was in a pitiful state.

Mūsā ibn Maymūn came to me, and I found that he was of the highest degree of excellence, but he was overcome by his desire to excel and to lend his services to the powerful.¹¹⁶ He wrote a treatise on medicine which contained material from sixteen of Galen's treatises and from another five books.¹¹⁷ He set himself the condition of not changing even a letter (*scil.* of the texts which he used as sources) unless it was either a conjunction or the correlating *fā'* and he only copied out the passages without selecting them. He also wrote a treatise for the Jews entitled *Kitāb al-Dalāla*¹¹⁸ and cursed

¹¹⁶ The same idea is expressed by 'Abd al-Laṭīf in his autobiography: cf. below 178 and note 277.

¹¹⁷ Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II, 117 Müller; 583.3 Nizār Riḍā, in the context of the short biographical note on Mūsā ibn Maymūn quotes this compendium of sixteen of Galen's treatises. De Sacy (1810), 491, hypothesizes that the sixteen of Galen's treatises of Mūsā ibn Maymūn are the four books of the Περὶ διαφορᾶς, the four of the Περὶ διαγνώσεως σφυγμῶν, the four of the Περὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς σφυγμοῖς αἰτίων and finally, the four of the Περὶ προγνώσεως σφυγμῶν.

¹¹⁸ Cf. above note 114. In 1190 Maimonides completed his *Guide for the Perplexed*, in which Maimonides guides the perplexed towards a single truth, contrary to its division into a truth of faith and a truth of reason. This work was ideally dedicated, therefore, to the intellectuals of his own religion, who, because of their philosophical and scientific education, felt a certain perplexity with regard to the meaning and the value of biblical and rabbinical teachings concerning God, the origin of the world, and the validity and meaning of religious law: cf. Pines (1963). For Maimonides the truth of reason is the truth which philosophy has always sought, but, as he writes in a letter to his friend Samuel ibn Tibbon, that Plato's thought has been superseded by Aristotle's: Aristotle's works have in fact put down the roots for the foundation of all philosophy. Nevertheless the truth of reason, contained in Aristotle's works, must be studied seriously with the aid of the commentaries by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius. Of the Arabic philosophers, the only one to be taken into consideration as a valid exegete of Aristotelian thought is al-Fārābī: on the relationship between Maimonides and the thought of al-Fārābī and Maimonides' ideal debt to him see Berman (1974), 154–178 and in particular 154–157. The famous letter by Maimonides to Samuel ibn Tibbon is a document of inexorable value to us since it finds its ideal dedicatee in 'Abd al-Laṭīf. As Maimonides writes to Samuel ibn Tibbon: "Take care you do not read Aristotle's books without their commentaries: the commentary by Alexander of Aphrodisias, the commentary by Themistius, and the middle commentary by Averroes. As for the books you have mentioned and which you have at your disposition, the *De Pomo* and the *De Domo Aurea* (probably a pseudo-Aristotelian treatise on alchemy) are all senseless fantasies and nonsense. These two books are in fact among those works which have been attributed to Aristotle, but which in reality are not his. (...) In general I tell you not to weary yourself studying texts on logic, unless those written by the learned Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, because everything that he wrote in general and the treatise *On the Political Regime* in particular is full of wisdom. And the kind of author that he was can be

anyone who wrote this book in characters other than those of Hebrew script. I read this treatise and found it an evil book which perverted the foundations of the religious laws and their dogmas of faith by means of that which is held on by the other to consolidate them.

One day I found myself in the mosque and around me there was a large throng, when a master entered, badly dressed, but with a bright and friendly face. The throng started to pay their respects to him, greatly esteeming him, but I carried on with my speech. When the lecture was over, the *imām* of the mosque came over to me and said, "Do you know this master? He is Abū l-Qāsim al-Šārīṭ". I embraced him and said to him, "It is you I seek". I then took him to my accommodation and we had lunch together and discussed questions of *Ḥadīth*, and I found that he was precisely what I desired, what satisfied my eyes. His conduct was that of a true learned man and philosopher and also his appearance. He was content with necessary goods and was not attached to any worldly goods that could distract him from his search for most excellent realities. Later he was inseparable from me and I found that he had an expert knowledge of the works of the Ancients and those of Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī. Yet I found that I had no idea of any of these writings, since I had thought that Ibn Sīnā held all philosophy in him and that his books exhausted it. When we discussed *Ḥadīth*, I had the better of him in dialectic ability and refinement of language, but he had the better of me in the force of his argumentation and the clarity of his doctrine. I did not give up, however, until I found myself in agreement with him and I did not deviate from my line of thought and my conviction to follow him. He began to present me, one after another, with passages taken from the works of Abū Naṣr and Alexander and Themistius, thus subduing my repugnance and calming, moreover, my recalcitrant temperament until my attitude towards him became that of a man who now takes one step forwards and now one backwards".

understood by his words: he was really a very careful scholar. (...) The books of Aristotle are like the roots and the foundations of all these scientific works and, as I have said, they cannot be understood if not with their commentaries (...). The works of other authors, on the other hand, like those of Empedocles, Pythagoras, Hermes, and Porphyry, all contain an antiquated philosophy: it is not worth while, therefore, wasting time with them. The words of Plato, Aristotle's master, are, in his books, expressed in difficult and metaphorical terms and are not useful because those of Aristotle suffice and we do not need to tire ourselves over the books of his predecessors. (...) The books of Avicenna, although they are subtle and difficult, are not like those of al-Fārābī, but are useful, and he is an author whose words it is advisable to study and understand fully". Pines (1997), 335–349 stresses Maimonides' ambivalence with respect to the philosophy of Avicenna. On the influence of this letter by Maimonides on the Jewish philosophical tradition after him cf. Harvey (1992), 51–70. It is in any case worth stressing that in reality in the *Guide for the Perplexed* Maimonides takes up not only Aristotelian doctrines, but also Plato's political doctrine through the mediation of al-Fārābī and recognizes in the philosopher-prophet described in various of al-Fārābī's works the biblical Moses who received the revealed Law. Maimonides' philosophical proposal must have undoubtedly seemed audacious to his co-religionaries: 'Abd al-Laṭīf who is said in his biographies to have met Maimonides in Cairo, referring to the *Guide for the Perplexed* states openly that Maimonides had written a treatise "heretical" to his co-religionaries.

In a few but important lines ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī describes as a painful intellectual and also internal event the process which brought him to reject the philosophy of Avicenna and to adhere to the ancient Peripatetic tradition. His encounter with the Peripatetic tradition took place due to the lively cultural environment of Cairo, where Aristotelian philosophy was being reconstructed, as can be deduced both from the passages above and from Maimonides’ correspondence, according to the exegesis of Alexander, Themistius, and al-Fārābī. In Cairo, for the first time our author studied the books of the Ancients and on the basis of these he began to test the validity of Avicenna’s doctrines. From this comparison emerged the inferiority of Avicenna both from the point of view of form and content. Nevertheless, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf was intimately loath to renounce he who had been his master and the inspiration behind his research from his youth.

‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s pilgrimage in search of a master in philosophy till his encounter with Abū l-Qāsim al-Šārīṭī shows how in ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s age the ancient sciences continued to be studied and taught even though the institutions did not support them directly. As it has been observed, “as ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s description shows, many scholars taught the ancient sciences in a private setting, usually in their homes, while at the same time being supported by a salary for teaching Arabic grammar or Islamic sciences in an endowed institution. Certainly it was more difficult to acquire an education in the ancient sciences than in the heavily supported Islamic sciences, and ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s journeys and disappointments attest to those difficulties. Nevertheless, the transmission of knowledge in medicine, mathematics, philosophy, and other scientific fields was upheld and continued to flourish at the hands of outstanding individual scholars like ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī”.¹¹⁹

Following this crucial experience in Cairo is an account of the last years of his life which, after the death of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, took the form of a long series of journeys. In a recent study it has been convincingly observed that all ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s early travels were in search of knowledge, instruction, teachers and books, whereas all his latter travels were motivated by, or at the behest of, patrons.¹²⁰

“News spread that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had reached an armistice with the Franks and had returned to Jerusalem. Then I felt the need to go to him.¹²¹ I took with

¹¹⁹ Toorawa (2004), 109.

¹²⁰ Toorawa (2004a), 59.

¹²¹ After 13 September 1192, when ‘Abd al-Laṭīf was 30 years old, he went back to Jerusalem to see Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn again: Toorawa (2004a), 64.

me the works of the Ancients which I could (*scil.* transport) and I headed for Jerusalem. There I saw an extraordinary king who filled one’s eyes with reverence and hearts with affection, simple even in his being afar, affable, and dear. His companions tried to be like him and they vied with each other in rectitude as the Almighty says, “*We shall strip away all rancour that is in their breasts*”.¹²² The first night I presented myself to him, I found a crowded assembly of learned men who were discussing the various kinds of sciences, and he knew how to listen and take part in the conversation. He started (*scil.* to speak) of the way of building walls and the digging of moats: he was well versed in this and gave all ingenious ideas. He was in fact then involved in the building of the walls of Jerusalem, including the digging of the moat – he had taken on this responsibility for himself. He carried the stones on his shoulders and a crowd of people, rich and poor, strong and weak, followed his example, even the secretary ‘Imād al-Dīn,¹²³ and al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil.¹²⁴ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn devoted himself to this task from before sunrise until the tolling of midday, then arrived at his dwelling place, allowed himself lunch and rested. He would carry stones all afternoon and return in the evening, at which point he spent most of the night in planning what he would do the next day. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn assigned me thirty dinars a month in writing for the administration of the mosque (*ǧāmi‘a*) of Damascus¹²⁵ and his sons gave me a fixed pay, a quota of one hundred dinars a month.¹²⁶

I returned to Damascus and devoted myself to study and taught people in the Umayyad mosque. The more I studied the books of the Ancients the more my desire for them increased, while that for the books of Ibn Sīnā disappeared. I became aware of the falsehood of alchemy; I knew the truth of facts both as to its foundation, its founders, their lies, and their motivations. In this way I was saved from two grave, terrible, and ruinous errors. My thanks to God – let Him be praised – were for this reason doubled: most people in fact have gone on the path of perdition through the books of Ibn Sīnā and alchemy.¹²⁷

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn arrived first in Damascus, and then left it to take leave of the group of pilgrims (*scil.* who were going to Mecca). Finally he came back and

¹²² The verse in question is take from *sūra* 7 (*The Battlements*), verse 43 which literally says *We shall strip away all rancour that is in their breasts; and underneath them rivers flowing; and they will say: “Praise belongs to God, who guided us unto this; had God not guided us, we had surely never be guided. Indeed, our Lord’s Messengers came with the truth”. And it will be proclaimed: “This is your Paradise; you have been given it as your inheritance for what you did.”* English trans. A.J. Arberry.

¹²³ Cf. above note 103.

¹²⁴ Cf. above note 106.

¹²⁵ The mosque whose administration Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn entrusts to ‘Abd al-Lāṭif is the Umayyad mosque in Damascus or *ǧāmi‘a al-Ma‘mūr* which was an institution of knowledge with highly complex and diversified functions: cf. Makdisi (1981), 19–20; Eche (1967), 202–208.

¹²⁶ This monthly pay of one hundred dinars was ten times higher than the normal monthly salary of a professor of *fiqh* in a *madrasa* at that time: Cf. Makdisi (1981), 87; Jooose (2011), 41–42.

¹²⁷ Cf. above 122.

was taken by a fever. Someone incompetent practised a phlebotomy on him, his strength left him and he died after fourteen days (d. 3rd March 1193). The people grieved for him like the loss of a prophet. I do not believe that any king brought the people such grief with their death as Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, who was popular and loved by the pious and the immoral man, by the Muslim and the infidel.

His sons and his companions subsequently divided themselves like the descendants of the queen of Saba¹²⁸ and they spread out to all different countries. Most of them went to Egypt because of the prosperity of the country and the wealth of the capital of the kingdom of Egypt.

I stayed in Damascus where the sovereign authority was al-Malik al-Afḍal,¹²⁹ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's eldest son, until al-Malik al-'Azīz,¹³⁰ with the help of the Egyptian army, besieged his brother in Damascus without getting from him what he wanted. Then al-Malik al-'Azīz withdrew to Marḡ al-Ṣufar because he was afflicted by colic. After his recovery from colic I went to him and he allowed me to return with him (*scil.* to Cairo).¹³¹ He also assigned me a sum from the state treasury which was more than sufficient. I thus started to frequent the master Abū l-Qāsim again assiduously, morning and evening, until he died.

When his illness got worse – it was in fact a pleurisy due to the discharge of catarrh from the head – and I prescribed him a medicine, he declaimed in verse, “*Do not keep the bird away from the tree the bitter taste of who's fruit I have already experienced (madīd¹³²)*”. When I then asked him if he was suffering, he replied to me, “*A wound cannot harm a dead man (ḥaffīf¹³³)*”.

In this period my life consisted of giving lessons to the people at the *al-Azhar* mosque¹³⁴ from early morning to roughly the fourth hour. In the middle of the day came those who studied medicine and other disciplines with me. At the end of the day I returned to the *al-Azhar* mosque to give lessons

¹²⁸ On this proverbial use, fairly frequent in 'Abd al-Laṭīf – cf. for example 'Abd al-Laṭīf, *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-ītibār*, 222.10–11 Zand-Videan-Videan – see Lane (1872), 1.4.1286c–1287a.

¹²⁹ The eldest son of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn: al-Malik al-Afḍal Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī Nūr al-Dīn (1169–1225). On the death of his father he was placed at the head of the Ayyūbid family and designated governor of Damascus, but he did not reveal himself to be particularly capable at politics and progressively lost control of Damascus and Egypt until he became subject to the authority of the Seljuk sultan of Rūm.

¹³⁰ Cf. above note 105.

¹³¹ 'Abd al-Laṭīf accompanied al-Malik al-'Azīz to Cairo in July 1196: Toorawa (2004a), 64.

¹³² The *madīd* is a metre of Arabic poetry cf. Wright (1967), II. 358–368 and in particular 367.

¹³³ The *ḥaffīf* is also a metre of Arabic poetry cf. Wright (1967), II. 358–368 and in particular 367–68.

¹³⁴ It is difficult to give a bibliography capable of describing the institutions of knowledge present and active in the *Azhar* mosque in Cairo in the period in which 'Abd al-Laṭīf frequented this mosque and taught there. In the first place in fact the information given to us by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a in this passage of the *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī tabaqāt al-aṭibbā'* is among the little we have available; in the second place studies so far have described the activities of this mosque in the Fātimid period immediately preceding the age of the Ayyūbid as Eche (1967), 85–86 and 96–97, or in the Mameluke period immediately following as Berkey (1992).

to others.¹³⁵ At night I worked on my own. I never departed from this routine until the death of al-Malik al-ʿAzīz. He was a generous young man, courageous, very modest, to whom it did not seem proper to say no. As to any desire for worldly goods and pleasures, he was, despite his tender age and his being in the flower of his youth, perfectly moderate”.¹³⁶

After these facts the master Muwaffaq al-Dīn lived in Cairo for a certain time and received honours and payments from the sons of al-Malik al-Nāṣir¹³⁷ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. While he was there a terrible plague swept through Egypt and there was a serious epidemic, such as had never been seen.¹³⁸ The master Muwaffaq al-Dīn wrote a book in which he recorded the facts which he had witnessed or which he had heard from those who had seen them in person, which struck the imagination. He entitled this book *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-ʾitibār fi-l-umūr al-muṣāhada wa-l-ḥawādīt al-muʿyana bi-arḍ miṣr (Book of the Report and the Account of the Things which I Witnessed and the Events Seen in the Land of Egypt)*.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ In this passage 'Abd al-Laṭīf's teaching routine at the *Azhar* mosque in Cairo is described. He held courses from the morning to roughly four o'clock in the afternoon, probably on specifically Islamic disciplines such as grammar, law, and Koranic sciences. At midday he received students of medicine and philosophy, probably privately. He then returned to the mosque to hold other courses.

¹³⁶ Cf. above note 105.

¹³⁷ Honorific title of the Fāṭimid Viziers adopted by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in 1169, when, on the death of his uncle Šīrkūh, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn he took his place as Fāṭimid Vizier in command of the Syrian troops.

¹³⁸ 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-BaĠdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-ʾitibār*, 222.5–254.6 Zand-Videan-Videan, recounts that in the year 597/ 1201, due to great drought, it was clear that the Nile would not flood and irrigate and fertilize the cultivated land. This caused an incredible increase in food prices. The famine brought innumerable social upheavals and popular riots. There were two forms of emigration, from the provinces to the big urban centres and from Egypt to Syria, the Maġreb, and Yemen. Famine led to a frightful epidemic. 'Abd al-Laṭīf wells in particular on his description of the practice of cannibalism on children which the desperate population were brought to.

¹³⁹ For the history, editions, and translations of this work see above note 6. In it 'Abd al-Laṭīf quotes Aristotle and Galen five times, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Hippocrates only once. With regard to Aristotle, 'Abd al-Laṭīf quotes the observations that he was supposed to have made on the plants of *labah* and opium (he says that the first was a medicinal plant used in Persia as a poison, which became an edible plant in Egypt, and of the second that it should not be mixed with medicines for the eyes and ears because it will turn people blind and deaf: cf. respectively 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-BaĠdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-ʾitibār*, 32.5–34.5; 68.3–8 Zand-Videan-Videan). He also says that in Alexandria he saw an enormous column of red granite called *ʿAmūd al-Sawārī* and another four hundred columns broken into two or three parts left to surface on the beach, where the sea laps at the walls of the city. 'Abd al-Laṭīf wrongly believes that all these columns must have once made up the portico under which Aristotle and his successors taught (cf. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-BaĠdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-ʾitibār*, 128.13–132.6 Zand-Videan-Videan). On the implications of his report on what he assumed to be the remains of the Library of Alexandria, and its elaboration by al-Qifṭī, see Richter-Bernburg (2008), 537–54. He also quotes Aristotle's *Book of Animals* (cf. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-BaĠdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-ʾitibār*, 150.3 Zand-Videan-Videan). As is known, in fact, in the Arabic tradition the *Historia animalium* – in ten books of which the tenth is spurious – the *De generatione animalium* – in five books – and the *De partibus animalium* – in four

Then when the sultan al-Malik al-Ādil Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Ayyūb¹⁴⁰ took control of the land of Egypt, most of Syria and the eastern regions (i.e. in the period between 1199 and 1218), the sons of his brother al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn scattered and their power was eliminated, and the master Muwaffaq al-Dīn came to Jerusalem and stayed there for a certain time. He attended the *al-Aqṣā*¹⁴¹ mosque assiduously and the people studied many disciplines under his guidance. He wrote many treatises there.

He then moved to Damascus and stayed in this city at the *‘azīziyya madrasa*;¹⁴² this happened in the year 604 (1207). He devoted himself to teaching and study. Many people went to him to study and learn various disciplines under his guidance. In Damascus he distinguished himself in the art of medicine, wrote many books on this scientific field, and was very well-known. Before this his notoriety was rather in the science of grammar. He lived for some time in Damascus where the people derived great benefit from him, and afterwards he went to Aleppo.

Then he moved to Anatolia and established himself there for several years. He was in the retinue of al-Malik ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Dā’ūd ibn Bahrām, the governor (*Ṣāḥib*) of the city of Erzinjan: he enjoyed great influence and great dignity with him, received money in abundance, and studied a lot. He wrote numerous works dedicating them to him. This prince had in fact high

books— had been incorporated together under the title *Kitāb al-Ḥayāwān, Book of Animals*: Peters (1968a), 47–48; Provençal (1995), 315–33. Finally he also quotes the *Politics* (cf. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-‘tibār*, 174.11 Zand-Videan-Videan). He makes Alexander of Aphrodisias the author of a short historical work which speaks of the Jews, the Magi, the Sabaeans, and the Copts (cf. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifādah wa-l-‘tibār*, 175 Zand-Videan-Videan). He quotes Galen’s opinions on the sycamore plant and the therapeutic effects of a balsamic oil produced in Palestine (cf. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-‘tibār*, 38.5–10; 42.11–13 Zand-Videan-Videan). He also mentions some of Galen’s anatomical treatises, in particular his commentary on Hippocrates’ treatise *Airs, Waters, and Places*, here called *The Different Airs and the Different Places*, (‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-‘tibār*, 176.1–2 Zand-Videan-Videan). He discusses the bone structure of the lower jawbone and corrects Galen’s opinion that it was made up of two bones instead of one; he then discusses the sacrum-coccyx complex which for Galen was made up of six bones, while ‘Abd al-Laṭīf held it to be formed of one single bone (cf. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-‘tibār*, 272.9–276.12 Zand-Videan-Videan).

¹⁴⁰ On al-Malik al-Ādil Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ayyūb (1145–1218), also called Sayf al-Dīn or Sword of the Faith, heir to the political power of his brother Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn cf. al-Dahabī in the *Ta’rīḥ al-Islām, Ṭabaqāt 615*, in Cahen (1970), 111.9–113.

¹⁴¹ The *al-Aqṣā* mosque is at the southern end of the great esplanade of mosques in Jerusalem. The name *al-Aqṣā* means “the most remote” and it indicates the place furthest from Mecca where according to Muslim tradition Muḥammad was miraculously transported. *Sūra 17 (The Children of Israel)*, verse 1 reads “*Glory to (God) Who did take His Servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless,—in order that we might show him some of our Signs: for He is the One Who heareth And seeth (all things)*” English trans. A.J. Arberry. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf seems to have taught different disciplines in this mosque, which are unfortunately not specified as being either exclusively Koranic, traditional, and Islamic sciences or also including rational disciplines.

¹⁴² In the *‘Azīziyya madrasa* founded by the Ayyūbids, where ‘Abd al-Laṭīf says he taught, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was buried.

aspirations, was full of modesty, generous of spirit, and he had already partly devoted himself to the sciences. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf did not leave his retinue until the sultan Kayqubād (1220–1237), son of Kayḥusraw (1205–1211) and grandson of Qilič Arslān (1202–1205),¹⁴³ the governor of Erzerum, usurped his realm (1228).¹⁴⁴ After this the sultan Kayqubād arrested the governor of Erzincan and nothing more was heard of him.

The master Muwaffaq al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Laṭīf recounts, “When it was the 17th of *dū l-Qa‘da*, 625 (18th October, 1228) I went to Erzerum; on the 11th of *Ṣafar* of the following year (30th December, 1228) I returned to Erzincan from Erzerum. In mid *Rabi‘ l-Awwal* (February 1229) I went to Kamāh, in the month of *ḡumādā al-awwal* (April 1229) I went from there to Divriği, in the month of *raḡab* (June 1229) I went from there to Malatya, and at the end of the month of *ramaḡdān* (August 1229) I returned to Aleppo. We held the prayer for the feast at the end of the fast (23rd August, 1229) in Bahnasā’ and we entered Aleppo on Friday 9 of *ṣawwāl* (31st August, 1229).¹⁴⁵ We found the population of Aleppo had doubled just like the well-being and the prosperity of the city thanks to the good conduct of the atābak Šihāb al-Dīn.¹⁴⁶ The people were unanimous in loving him for the correct balance which characterized his relationship with his subjects”.

The master Muwaffaq al-Dīn lived in Aleppo,¹⁴⁷ where the people studied under his guidance and his writings multiplied. He had in the eunuch Šihāb al-Dīn Tuḡrīl atābak of Aleppo a good protector. He devoted himself entirely to teaching the art of medicine and other disciplines. He often frequented the mosque of Aleppo to hold lessons in *ḥadīṭ* and to teach the Arabic language. He was always busy studying, writing assiduously, and composing treatises.

At this point Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a quotes a first letter that he says he wrote from Damascus to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī while the latter was in Aleppo and a second letter sent instead to his father in Damascus by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf himself, following the Arab bio-bibliographical practice which tended to stress any relations with the masters whose lives were being recounted in an attempt to give greater veracity to the information conveyed.

All the time ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī stayed in Aleppo, I tried, without success, to get in contact with him and to meet him. We always received his

¹⁴³ For these three important Seljuk sultans of Anatolia between the Ayyūbid age and that of the Mongol invasions see Cahen (1990), IV, 817–819; Cahen (1990a), IV, 816–817; Cahen (1986), V, 103–104; Cahen (2001).

¹⁴⁴ Following a political plan of territorial expansion Kayqubād I ‘Alā’ al-Dīn usurped the power of the governor of Erzincan in 1228. Cf. Bosworth (1996), 213–214.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Toorawa (2004a), 53–70, in particular ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s chronology and itinerary at 63–65.

¹⁴⁶ The sovereign power of the territory of Aleppo was then in the hands of al-Malik al-‘Aziz Muḥammad, the grandson of Šalāḥ al-Dīn, who had come to the throne at the age of only two in 1216. Power was held in practice until his majority by the eunuch Tuḡrīl, nicknamed Šihāb al-Dīn: cf. De Sacy (1810), 493.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf reached Aleppo at the end of August 1229; Toorawa (2004a), 65.

letters, however, and his messages; he also sent me some of his works, written in his hand. What follows is a copy of a letter which I wrote to him while he was in Aleppo.

“Your servant offers his entreaty, his praise, his gratitude, and his unconditioned devotion to the high, noble, illustrious, well-known, extremely famous, great, wise, excellent Muwaffaq al-Dīn, lord of the wise in times past and present, he who holds within him the most varied sciences of those of men, protector of the prince of believers. God make the paths of direction clear to him and illuminate for other the ways of knowledge. Let us know thanks to the exactitude of his words and the true way of reaching perfect union with the divinity. His excellence does not cease and is of eternal duration, his lordship is in eternal ascent, his works are in the world a model for the learned and the basis of all men of letters and philosophy.

Your servant renews his homage, gives his best regards, the most sincere thanks, and his dearest praise; he makes known to you the pain which his desire to see the rays of light of your splendid sun brings to him, the joy provoked by the exciting vision of your illustrious presence; he informs you furthermore of the growing apprehension and the worsening of his insomnia in learning that the aim of his pilgrimage is so near. *The desire will never be so oppressive as when it is near the land of lands (al-wāfir)*.¹⁴⁸

If it were not for the hope that our illustrious traveller might come here, and that we might enjoy the sight of your lordship – protected by God and glorious – your servant would have hurried to come and receive you, would have promptly presented himself before you and would have offered you – O illustrious one – his homage. He would also have been able to admire the beauty of your appearance. What must be the happiness of those who manage to see you; what glad news does he receive, he who presents himself before you! What must be the joy of he who enjoys for himself your interest in him, he who manages to draw from the sea of your excellence, who manages to grasp some of your high qualities, who is lit by the sun of your knowledge, while he spends the night in the brightness of its stars?

I pray to God the Almighty to allow me to meet you to obtain for me the union of joy which I would feel in seeing you with that which I would feel in listening to you, and again to obtain your grace and your nobility pleasing to God the Almighty”.

There follow passages taken from the letters of the master Muwaffaq al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Laṭīf. He initially wrote a letter to my father where he said of me, “The son of the son¹⁴⁹ is dearer than the son. This Muwaffaq al-Dīn¹⁵⁰ is the son of my son and no one is dearer to me than him. Ever since his early youth he has shown me that he has talent”. He then says many appreciative

¹⁴⁸ A particular metre in Arabic poetry cf. Wright (1967), II, 358–368 and in particular 363.

¹⁴⁹ In this passage ‘Abd al-Laṭīf calls Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a’s father son and Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a himself grandson: ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, as Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a says, had been the master of philology and literary Arabic of his father (cf. above 102). The term son, therefore, could express a master’s affection for one of his old pupils and thus have an affectionate and not parental value.

¹⁵⁰ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a, like ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, had the honorific title Muwaffaq al-Dīn.

things and gives much praise. He, moreover, says: “If I could go to him in order to make him study under my guidance, I would go”.

It emerges from this text that it was his intention to come to Damascus and to settle down there. It was then that he had the idea of going first on pilgrimage (*scil.* to Mecca), and to start his journey towards Baghdad. He arrived there to leave some of his works to al-Mustanşir bi-Allāh.¹⁵¹ Once he arrived in Baghdad he fell ill and died – God have pity on him – the first day of the week, the 12th of *muḥarram* of the year 629 (9th November, 1231), and was buried next to his father in the *Wardīyya* cemetery. Since he left the city of Baghdad he had remained absent from it for forty-five years. God the Almighty guided him back there and there ended his fate.¹⁵²

There follows a spiritual testament, almost an exhortation to philosophy, of the master ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī to his pupils.¹⁵³ This sort of ideal legacy stresses first of all ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s moral rigour, his profound passion for study and teaching, the perfect co-existence in him of a Muslim upbringing and the inheritance of Greek knowledge, his disdain for worldly goods, and awareness that different peoples and races concur in the transmission of knowledge. It also suggests a certain aristocratic concept of knowledge: it must bring out the truth and lead to excellence; it is not expressed in the language of the masses, but thanks to it the people can be educated; knowledge is internal meditation before it becomes the spoken word. And it also expresses the conviction that education to knowledge, conducted according to a dialectic method, leads man to reasoning by emancipating him from his own nature and bringing him closer to God who “pervades being with his science”.

By reading between the lines – and this in reality is the most significant aspect of the pages that follow – we have the impression of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s firm awareness that every science enjoys its own particular epistemological status and, hence, its own method. Only with the latter can it and must it be taught and discussed. With this awareness, as we will see, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf was able to write his *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*.

¹⁵¹ Al-Mustanşir the ‘Abbāsīd caliph from 1226 to 1242: cf. Hillenbrand (1993), VII. 727–728.

¹⁵² According to Makdisi (1981), 88, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s return to Baghdad with the desire to present the Caliph al-Mustanşir with some of his works could be connected to the foundation of the new *madrasa* by this Caliph. Precisely in 1231, in fact, the foundations of this new *Mustanşiriyya madrasa* were laid, while it was due to be inaugurated according to custom two years after the start of building work. In this case ‘Abd al-Laṭīf hoped perhaps to hold the chair of *fiqh* which followed the *şāfi‘ī madhhab* in that *madrasa*.

¹⁵³ Among ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s pupils there were the traditionalist scholar al-Birzālī (d. 1239); Ibn al-Sūrī, a physician expert in Botanic, (d. 1242); the Judge al-Tifāşī (d. 1253); the historian Ibn al-‘Adīm (d. 1262); and the biographer Ibn Ḥallikān (d. 1282) cf. Joosse–Pormann (2010), 5–6.

From the words of Muwaffaq al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī taken from what I have copied in his handwriting where it says: “Every night, when you go to sleep in your bed, you must examine your conscience, you must examine what you have done that was good during the day and you must thank God for this; you must then examine what you have done that was bad, ask God’s pardon for this and you must stop doing it. Concentrate on the good things to do tomorrow and ask God for help in this”.

Then he says: “I urge you not to study the sciences from books unaided. Even if you have confidence in yourself regarding your ability to learn, go to the professors for every science you seek to acquire; if that professor should turn out to be limited, take from him what he possesses until you find a better professor than he is; it is in any case your duty to venerate and respect him.¹⁵⁴ If you are able to help him with your earthly goods, do it,¹⁵⁵ otherwise do it with your words and your praise.

When you read a book make every effort to learn it by heart and master its meaning. Imagine that the book got lost and that you could do without it, since its loss would not afflict you. When you are devoting yourself to the study of a book and you try to understand it, make sure you do not work together on another and pay attention so that the time you wanted to spend on the former is not taken up by the latter.

Be careful not to apply yourself at the same time to two types of knowledge and devote yourself to a single discipline for one or two years or for however long God wishes. When you have reached your goal in this, move on to another discipline. Do not think, however, that you can be content when you have made one discipline your own: you need to continue to work on it in order for it to grow and not to diminish. You will work on it by recalling it to memory and making it the object of your reflection. The beginner works by learning by heart, studying, and discussing with his peers, while the scholar works by teaching and writing.

When you come to teach a science or to engage a discussion on it, do not confuse it with another science: every science in fact is self-sufficient, self-contained, and not in need of anything else. Your recourse to one science for another shows an inability to treat its parts exhaustively, like he who uses one language for another when he is insufficient in it or is ignorant of some of its parts”.

Then he recounts: “It is appropriate for man to read histories, study biographies and the experiences of nations; by doing so, it will be as if, in the course of his short life, he lived with the peoples of the past, were a contemporary of theirs, were familiar with them, and knew what there was in them that was good and bad”.

¹⁵⁴ We also find in the autobiography the idea that you must take from every master what he is able to give in order later to make progress in research, if possible, with the help of a better master. Nevertheless even if your ability exceeds that of the master you still owe him respect. Cf. below 179–180.

¹⁵⁵ In his autobiography ‘Abd al-Laṭīf says he supported the master Abū l-Qāsim al-Šārī at his expense in Cairo: cf. below 178–180.

Furthermore he says: “Your conduct should be the conduct of the first Muslims. Therefore read the life of the Prophet – may God’s greeting and blessing be upon him – follow the example of his actions and his vicissitudes, follow his footsteps and force yourself to imitate him as far as it is possible for you, within the limits of your abilities. When you come to know his conduct regarding eating, drinking, dressing, sleeping, waking, being ill, being healed, feeling pleasure, using perfumes, and as to his relationship with his Lord, his wives, his friends and his enemies and you carry out a little part of this, you will be completely happy”.

And again he affirms: “It is appropriate for you often to mistrust your soul rather than have a good concept of it, for you to submit your thoughts to men of culture and their writings, that you proceed with caution, that you avoid hurry. Do not puff yourself up with pride, since vainglory brings with it obstacles and obstinacy brings with it error. He who has not turned his forehead squarely to the doors of the men of culture is not rooted in excellence. He who has not been ridiculed (*scil.* by learned men) will not be revered by the people. He who has not been blamed will not excel. He who has not suffered the strain of study will not taste the joy of knowledge. He who has not worked hard will not have success.

When you are free from study and reflection, keep your tongue busy in pronouncing the name of God; sing his praises, especially at night, since your essence will be impregnated with Him, your imagination will be permeated and you will talk of Him during your sleep.

When you experience joy and pleasure in some worldly things, remind yourself of death and the transience of life and the various worries. When something destroys you, repeat the following words, “*We belong to God and to Him we return*”.¹⁵⁶ When you happen to disobey him, ask (*scil.* God’s) forgiveness, and hold death before your eyes; science and religious piety be your preparation for the next world.

When you want to disobey God, look for a place where he cannot see you. Know that the people function as God’s eyes on his servant, show them the good that is in him, even if he hides it, and the evil, even if he conceals it: thus his interiority is exposed to God and God exposes it to his servants. Be careful to make your interiority better than your exteriority and your private life more perfect than your public life.

Do not cry if the world turns its back on you, since the world would distract you from acquiring excellent qualities; rarely he who possesses much wealth goes into science in depth, unless he is of such sublime intelligence or he has become rich after having already acquired the science. I do not say however that it is the word which must distance itself from he who seeks science, but vice versa it will be the latter who distances himself from the world as all his effort is turned towards science; thus he is not left with time for

¹⁵⁶ The verse in question is taken from *sūra* 2 (*The Cow*), verse 156 which says, “*who, when they are visited by an affliction, say, ‘Surely we belong to God, and to Him we return’*” English trans. A.J. Arberry.

worldly affairs. Worldly things are obtained, in fact, thanks to avidity and reflection on the means to obtain them. So when he does not pay attention to the means with which to obtain them, they will not come forward alone. Moreover, he who seeks science is too exalted in himself for base occupation, for worldly profit, for the various types of commercial trafficking, for self-humiliation before men of power in the world for waiting before their doors. One of my friends has a verse which he recites thus, "*He who strives seriously in scientific research is allowed by the dignity of the sciences to avoid the baseness of acquiring*". All activities aimed at earning worldly goods require free time, ability, and dedicating one's time to them; he who devotes himself to science is not able to do any of this. He only hopes that it is the world which comes to him even without means, that the world seeks him without him seeking it, as it does in other cases, but this is wrong of him and excessive. Nevertheless, when man dominates science and has become famous in it, he is sought after everywhere and is offered positions of prestige: the world presents itself to him submissive and he conquers it by maintaining his honour perfectly intact, his dignity and his religiosity are preserved.

Know that science leaves a trace and a trail which reveal its possessor, a ray of light and brilliance which shines on him and makes him stand out, as in the case of the merchant of moss: his place cannot be concealed, nor can his wares be ignored; just as in the case of he who walks with a torch in a dark night. Furthermore the learned man is loved wherever he is and in whatever condition and he meets only those who are well disposed towards him, those who comes near him, who seek out his company, and are gratified by his proximity.

Know also that the sciences first disappear, then re-emerge at a certain time only to disappear again to one another as in the case of plants and sources of water: they pass from one people to another and from one country to another".

And again I have copied from Muwaffaq al-Dīn 'Abd al-Laṭīf's discourse a passage, in his hand, where he says: "Construct your speech most of the time according to the following characteristics: it must be short, expressed in fine language, with an important meaning or at least one easily acceptable, with well constructed enigmas, but more or less resolvable. Do not construct a careless speech as the mass would do, but differentiate it by elevating it from that, without making it too distant from them. Beware of empty chat and senseless speeches, avoid remaining silent in a situation in which it is necessary to speak and it is up to you to bring out a truth, or to be well liked, or to exhort to excellence. Beware of laughing while you speak, from speaking too much, from cutting a speech short. Construct your speech on the other hand in an ordered fashion pronounced calmly in such a way that one realises from you that what is behind the speech is greater than what you set out and that your speech comes from previous maturing and from past reflection".

Again the master says: "Beware of using vulgarity in your speech and of expressing harshness in discussion. In fact, this makes the beauty of the speech disappear, diminishes its usefulness, deprives it of its sweetness, causes rancour, cancels out feelings of friendship, makes he who speaks

boring – so that his silence is more pleasant than listening to his speech – makes spirits rise up in opposition to the speech and levels the language with its vulgarity and with the loss of its inviolability”.

He says furthermore: “Do not believe yourself to be superior to the point of becoming unbearable: do not underrate yourself to the point of despising yourself and of holding yourself to be of no consideration”.

And again: “Construct your speech all like a dialectic argument. Reply according to what you think rationally, not according to what habit leads you to or according to what you have already become familiar with.

Leave the habits of youth, free yourself from natural customs. Construct your speech mostly with theological tones without letting yourself be surpassed by he who learns a passage from the Koran, or a wise saying, or a valuable verse, or a proverb”.

Again he says: “Avoid mistreating people, criticising kings, being impolite with society, avoid the excesses of anger, (*scil.* and remember that) the limit in this is subtle”.

Finally, he says: “Increase your knowledge by heart of proverbial poems, philosophical sentences, and singular thoughts”.

In his prayer – God have mercy on him – he says: “Oh my God keep us from the rebellion of nature, from the disobedience of the evil soul, render docile into us he who brings us your help, lead us on the right path, You who are the guide for the blind, He who leads those who are lost back to the right path, He who revives through faith the hearts of those who are dead, He who illuminates the shadows of perdition with the light of perfection, lead us by hand from the abyss of ruin, tear us from the mud of nature, purify us from the filth of abject worldly goods, for our devotion to You and for the fear of You: You who are the sovereign of this world and the other”.

One of his hymns says: “Glory to God who pervades being with his science, who deserves to be adored from every aspect. The whole universe shines with the light of his glory and the sun of his knowledge sheds light with its rays on the souls, that is to say, there is an illumination”.

A list of his works¹⁵⁷ concludes the biography of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī recounted by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a. This portrait outlined in the *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’* allows us to place ‘Abd al-Laṭīf between the Ayyūbid and the Mameluke period, that is in a historical and cultural period of the Arabic-Islamic world many aspects of which are still unknown to us.

From it, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf appears as a representative figure of his time and is thus particularly complex. Besides his interest and solid education in the Islamic sciences – grammar and calligraphy, disputation and dialectic, *ḥadīth*, according to the *šāfi‘ī madhhab*, Koran and key scholarly texts – he showed an extraordinary curiosity for and a industriousness in the cultural

¹⁵⁷ Ample space will be devoted to an examination of this list at the end of this chapter Cf. below, 197–199.

field which led him to occupy himself with medicine, alchemy (and then to reject it), and geography. His spasmodic search for a master in the field of philosophy led him to meet, either directly or through their works, philosophers such as Avicenna, al-Ġazālī, al-Suhrawardī, and Moses Maimonides: each implicated in their own way in the controversial question of the relationship between faith and reason and, hence, between theology and metaphysics. But it was not only his meeting with these great men, which characterized the intellectual experience of our author. It clearly emerges from this text in fact, that many school masters and many different environments and cities with their particular cultural climate had an impact on his education: Baghdad, Mosul, Aleppo, Damasco, the centres of Anatolia, and, above all, Cairo. Cairo represented for ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī the much-desired goal of his pilgrimage, the place where he finally met Aristotle and his philosophy, that of his commentators Themistius and Alexander, and where he finally met the greatest Arabic Aristotelian commentator of the East, al-Fārābī, he who was the first to be able to integrate Islamic and Greek knowledge and to justify a new system of the sciences. The experience of Cairo also meant for ‘Abd al-Laṭīf the progressive abandonment of Avicennan philosophy, which in the years of his education he had held to be the only one possible and which, after his adhesion to the Peripatetic tradition, he vehemently criticized.

In the *Kitāb al-Naṣīḥatayn*, which I will present in the following section, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf makes explicit his criticisms of Avicenna’s doctrine.

2. *The Kitāb al-Naṣīḥatayn*

In 1959, in the course of a journey in Turkish lands, Samuel Miklos Stern found an important miscellaneous manuscript in Bursa, n°823 of the *Hüseyin Çelebi* collection, which contained a certain number of treatises by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī.¹⁵⁸

By careful examination of the manuscript, Stern discovered that, judging from its calligraphy, it had been written by a professional scribe, probably on the 25th *ġumādā* of 622, that is, the 4th July, 1225, as stated in the colophon. The manuscript, according to Stern, had been commissioned by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf himself and personally corrected by him and furnished with numerous notes: several indications concur to confirm this hypothesis.

¹⁵⁸ Stern (1962), 53–70; Stern (1983), 53–70.

In the first place, at the end of the treatise *On Minerals and the Confutation of Alchemy* (fol. 132r), ‘Abd al-Laṭīf specifically states that he is in the year 622 (1225) and that he wants to add to the treatise an account of his recent meeting with an alchemist. The treatise would seem to have been copied therefore immediately after the author’s final revision.

Moreover, both on the folio which bears the title of the treatise (fol. 124r) and, in the course of the manuscript, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf is simply called by name, without any honorific title: this usually happened when manuscripts were written by the authors themselves or for the authors themselves, and a case to the contrary is extremely rare.

Finally the manuscript bears signs of a revision in a different hand from that of the initial script – Stern here gives a large number of examples. The corrections concern the order of the folios, which in most cases have not been copied by the copyist in the correct order; at times they correct titles and dates. Their typology therefore seems to support the hypothesis of a revision by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf himself.¹⁵⁹

Among the works contained in the manuscript Bursa, *Hüseyin Çelebi*, 823 we find, on fols 62r-100v, the *Kitāb al-Naṣīhatayn*, a diatribe against false knowledge, which ‘Abd al-Laṭīf held to be an evil worse than ignorance itself. The work is divided into two parts, “two pieces of advice” for would-be physicians and would-be philosophers, and it contains an impassioned polemic against false doctors, followed by an equally harsh invective against false philosophers.

The strong link which ‘Abd al-Laṭīf makes between medical and philosophical knowledge, perfectly juxtaposed in him, just as his main polemical target, Avicenna, did not lack precedents in the two Greek authorities which he followed both in the field of philosophy and in that of medicine. In the treatise, *On Sense and Sensibilia*, lines 436a17–436b1, in fact, Aristotle himself affirms first of all that it is proper to the student of natural philosophy to consider the fundamental principles of health and illness, because these do not concern things devoid of life, in the second place, that almost all students of natural philosophy come to study medicine, and, finally, that those doctors who possess the art of medicine with greater theoretical awareness begin with the science of nature. For his part, Galen wrote a treatise on the theme “Ὅτι ὁ ἀριστος ἰατρὸς καὶ φιλόσοφος.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Stern (1962), 55–56, 67, 69. The hypothesis is confirmed by Dietrich (1964), 102–103.

¹⁶⁰ The edition of this treatise, which was translated into Arabic, is by Bachmann (1965).

2.1. *The Polemic Against False Doctors*

In my PhD dissertation from which this study derives, I analyzed in detail this first part of the *Kitāb al-Naṣīḥatayn* on medicine. But, since N.P. Joesse and P.E. Pormann have devoted some very informative studies to this text,¹⁶¹ and the edition by N.P. Joesse of this part of the *Kitāb al-Naṣīḥatayn* is forthcoming in Peter Dinzelsbacher's series *Beihefte zur Mediaevistik* (Peter Lang Frankfurt am Main/Berlin/New York), I limit myself here to consider this part on the base of these studies and, where it seems useful for my argument on philosophy, I add some observations.

In the first part of the treatise devoted to medicine and the physicians, 'Abd al-Laṭīf focuses on the epistemological status of the art of medicine using different comparisons which seem to be in contradiction: medicine is like both mathematics and the art of archery.¹⁶² Medicine is an art concerned with universals. For this reason it does not make errors. Mathematics is also a science which considers abstract concepts, but even in this theoretical science approximation occurs (the examples are that of the impossibility of squaring a circle and the approximation in writing an irrational number). Concerning the physicians, they are like the expert in the art of archery "who mostly hits the mark", but they can make mistakes because they are concerned with particulars. Good physicians, even if they do not hit the target, do not miss it entirely.¹⁶³

For 'Abd al-Laṭīf his contemporaries are like those whose arrows do not hit the targets, but on the contrary, fall in the opposite direction. The pitiful state of contemporary medicine, in contrast to the medicine of the ancients Hippocrates, Dioscorides and Galen, is caused by four reasons: the contemporaries do not follow a medical epistemology: they are charlatans; they think that book learning is sufficient for practicing medicine; and they use purgatives without the necessary skill.¹⁶⁴

Concerning the first point, 'Abd al-Laṭīf observes that, even in antiquity, medical sects had existed¹⁶⁵ which taught false medicine. 'Abd al-Laṭīf recalls, in particular, the Empirical and Methodist sects which

¹⁶¹ Joesse–Pormann (2008), 425–27 and Joesse–Pormann (2010), 1–29. Cf. also Joesse (2011), 34–35.

¹⁶² Joesse–Pormann (2008), 425–27.

¹⁶³ Cf. ms. Bursa, *Hüseyn Çelebi*, 823, fols 64r 14–65r 1.

¹⁶⁴ Joesse–Pormann (2010), 7–8.

¹⁶⁵ The notion of medical school appeared in Alexandria in the 3rd century BC. It later developed and imposed itself on the entire Roman world. A medical school is a group of doctors which accepts the teaching of a founding father or master of thought. The medical schools have two strategies of cohesion: obedience to its teaching and attack on the other sects through the publication of polemical writings. Cf. Gourevitch (1993), I, 121–163.

were in opposition to the Dogmatic or Rationalist one, according to the classic tripartition of medical schools which were known to Arabic authors due precisely to the Arabic translation of many introductory works by Galen and pseudo-Galen.¹⁶⁶

The Empirical sect of Sceptical inspiration, in fact, was neither concerned to study the anatomical structure of the human body nor the internal secrets of illnesses. It rejected any possible analogy between the dead body and the living body. It denied any general theory. The medicine which it taught, therefore, translated itself into a medical practice totally alien to the anatomic-physiological basis of symptoms and was wholly linked to clinical phenomena and the classification of symptoms and medicines.¹⁶⁷

The Methodist sect of Stoic and Epicurean inspiration, for which human life was the natural place for moral and physical suffering, held that the human body was formed of atoms which could not be perceived by the senses and which were in continual movement through pores and channels. According to this sect, illness came about in the case of an alteration in the quality and the movement of the corpuscles or in the case of an excessive tightening or relaxing of the pores through which the atoms moved. Therapy, therefore, was reduced to baths designed to provoke

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Walzer–Frede (1985). Stern (1962), 60, states that ʿAbd al-Laṭīf quotes several passages from Hippocrates and in particular from the *Kitāb fi miḥnat afdal al-aṭibbāʾ* (*Book on the Examination of the Best Doctors*) by Galen. This work by Galen is quoted by Moses Maimonides and Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa. Ḥunayn in fact translated it into Syriac for Buḥtīšūʾ and into Arabic for Muḥammad ibn Mūsā. Cf. Sezgin (1970), 125; Ullmann (1970), 52–53; Iskandar (1988).

¹⁶⁷ The medical sect of the Empiricists, which was created in Alexandria after approximately the mid 3rd century BC, had among its first exponents Philinus of Cos and Serapion of Alexandria. For them medicine was not a true science but accumulated knowledge on account of essentially fortuitous observations. That is to say, it consisted of a set of observations on the effects produced by the application of certain medicines to certain illnesses: it was therefore a collection of information practically devoid of any further elaboration. Since only that which can be observed possesses reality, for the Empiricists it was useless and superfluous to search tirelessly for the invisible (the remote causes of illness). Since this was hidden and secret the study of physiology and anatomy practiced by means of dissection, was unthinkable. Illness was merely the sum of the symptoms, and the causes of illnesses were evident: hunger, thirst, cold, heat, insomnia, and exertion. The important thing was not to look for what provokes an illness, but for what suppresses it. In their diagnosis and therapy the Empiricists followed three methods: “autopsy” in which the cure was established by collecting information from the personal observation of the individual doctor; “analogy”, that is to say, the so-called transfer from between similar things, in which similar medicines were applied for the same affection or the same medicine was applied for similar afflictions; and “history”, the method which drew on the collective medical experience of the present and the past (for example the works of Hippocrates) when deciding a cure. Cf. Gourevitch (1993), I. 127–129; Frede (1990), 225–250.

sweat in cases of the tightening of the pores and astringents and tonics in the case of dilation, in order to return to an intermediate perviousness.¹⁶⁸

‘Abd al-Latīf holds that the above sects are far removed from the medicine practiced by the Dogmatic doctors of Platonic and Aristotelian inspiration who considered anatomy and physiology¹⁶⁹ to be the fundamental, basic sciences and for whom the detailed study of the internal causes of an illness was primary and necessary.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the criteria followed

¹⁶⁸ The Methodist sect, which enjoyed great success in Rome, was founded by Themison of Laodicea, a pupil of Asclepiades of Prusa, in the 1st century BC. The medicine it practiced was based on generic and undifferentiated principles and attempted to reduce particular affections to affections considered general. For this reason it divided all particular affections into just two groups, characterized by a state of dilation of the pores or a state of restriction. The therapy that derived from such an approximate pathology was extremely general and quickly teachable: Thessalus of Tralles, one of the most well-known Methodist doctors in the time of Nero, maintained in fact that he could teach medicine in six months. The Methodists’ teaching was in fact characterized by three fundamental notions: the phenomenon, the community, and the indication. The phenomenon was what was apparent and could be perceived by the senses. The doctor could enlarge the field of phenomena by using instruments which allowed him to make further observations (they used for example the *speculum* in gynaecology). The concept of community was particularly complex and there was strong dissonance among the Methodists. It generally indicated the state of tension or relaxation of the pores which had to be brought back to a mixed state to bring the sick person back to health. The indication, finally, meant the therapy which differed as to whether it operated during the beginning, the growth, the height, or the decline of the illness and as to the psychology of the sick person. Cf. Gourevitch (1993), I. 130–135; Frede (1982), 1–23.

¹⁶⁹ Anatomy and physiology break into the field of medical knowledge with Aristotle. With the practice of animal dissection he introduced a change into the conception of the animal (and also human) body. It was no longer conceived of as a “black box” in which those humoral processes take place which can only be assessed by the physiologist on the basis of those materials which enter it (air, food, and drink) and leave it (excrement, haemorrhage, and sweat). For the first time therefore anatomo-physiology is introduced: that is to say that physiological theory which presupposes a sensible relationship between the structure of the organs and their relative functions. On the Aristotelian foundation of medical knowledge see Vegetti (1993), I. 76–81.

¹⁷⁰ The Dogmatic, Logical, and Rationalist school had as its ideal founder Hippocrates of Cos and as its masters Diocles of Carystus, Praxagoras of Cos, Herophilus of Chalcedon, Erasistratus of Chios, Mnesitheus of Athen, Asclepiades of Bithynia or Prusa, and Athenaeus of Attalia. The Dogmatics did not define themselves like the Empiricists and the Methodists with respect to a method, but with respect to their founder. Generally they were considered by the rival schools to be those who gave an excessively important role to speculation in medical discovery. The Dogmatics shared four fundamental theories. i. There exist obscure causes of illnesses, which cannot be perceived by the senses, but the doctor can discover them by building up an aetiology of illnesses. ii. These hidden causes are distinct from the evident causes, which are known by the senses and which could be indicated as the causes which immediately precede or set off the illness. iii. Medical theory, which is based on experimentation and the dissection of corpses, allows us to resolve the most difficult problems of anatomy and physiology, nosology and therapeutics. iv. Treatment is discovered by conjecture, but experience and experimentation are not to be excluded. The two most well-known Dogmatic schools were that of Herophilus and that of Erasistratus. On the two schools see Vegetti (1993), I. 89–114. See also Kundlien (1965), Supplementband X, cols 179–180.

by the Empirical and the Methodist sects were still scientific: the physicians followed a theory and did not proceed by pure and simple supposition, as most contemporary physicians did.¹⁷¹

See, in this respect, the following passage in the translation of Joesse and Pormann:

Galen complained about the Methodist sect and the Empiricist sect. Even though they all generally fall short and are deficient, they have useful rules and principles, which it is best to acquire and learn, especially those of the Empiricists. Galen reported many of their procedures in his *On Compound Drugs according to Places (Mayāmir)* and *On Compound Drugs according to Types (Qāṭāḡānis)*.¹⁷² Our contemporaries do not belong to any of the three sects which he (Galen) defined in his book *On the Sects for Beginners*, but rather rely on luck and chance like a blind man shooting an arrow without knowing in which direction the target is. The sect of the Methodists and Empiricists know the direction of the target, but shoot the arrow without first examining its specific position. The masters of reason (the Rationalists) know the direction and examine the position of the target, directing their arrow there in the most perfect and correct fashion. The Empiricists examine certain aspects of the target, such as its shadow, so that they deserve to hit the mark. The people of our time, however, do not examine the target, nor its direction, and one is therefore surprised not by their making a mistake, but by their getting things right, whereas one is surprised by the mistake of the Rationalists, and not their getting things right. (...) But these spongers (*al-mustarziqa*; i.e. the contemporaries) rarely get things right, and only accidentally whilst mostly making mistakes, and essentially at that (fol. 67r 10–67v 2).¹⁷³

Once again the image is that of the art of archery, but 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī goes on to give a true medical example of a man who suffers from fevers and describes the three different methods of the three sects in treating this man. Of course the most complete will be that of the Rationalists.¹⁷⁴

In 'Abd al-Laṭīf's opinion, the medicine of his age must rediscover and apply Greek medicine with its principles, descriptions of diseases, and therapies. Similarly to a good philosopher, in medicine a good physician must follow the positive principle of accumulation of knowledge:

¹⁷¹ On the good aspects of the Empiricists physicians of his time – itinerant practioners and female – according to 'Abd al-Laṭīf see Joesse–Pormann (2010).

¹⁷² 'Abd al-Laṭīf mention Galen's Περὶ συνθέσεως φαρμάκων τῶν κατὰ τόπους and Galen's Περὶ συνθέσεως φαρμάκων τῶν κατὰ γένη cf. Joesse – Pormann (2010), 9, note 40.

¹⁷³ Joesse–Pormann (2010), 9–10, 28.

¹⁷⁴ Joesse–Pormann (2010), 10–11, 28–29.

Some of those (*scil.* contemporaries) may say that the medicine of Hippocrates and Galen was appropriate for the country of the Greeks, but that the lands of Syria and Iraq do not allow for it. Only someone who has not read the books of the ancients and has not tested their content at all could think this! (...)

We find that Hippocrates agreed with those living long before him about the nature of things. He tested what people of old had said and found that in his day things had not changed; their judgements still applied. Likewise, Galen tested all of Hippocrates' opinions and found them to agree with what he thought; and between them there are six hundred years. People still test until today what Galen said and find it to agree with what they observed; and Galen lived roughly one thousand two hundred years before (fols 74r 13–74v 7)!¹⁷⁵

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī goes on to reject the idea that the people in Baghdad suffer different diseases from the Greek people because they live in two different regions with two different climates, according to the Ptolemaic division of the world in seven different climates. For 'Abd al-Laṭīf, Greek theoretical medicine is concerned with universals and is founded on the ground of universal principles which are valid everywhere. On this point it is useful to recall what Joosse and Pormann observe. 'Abd al-Laṭīf does not quote Hippocrates' work *Airs, Water, and Places* of which he knows the Arabic version of Galen's commentary (he quotes this text elsewhere). In this text, Hippocrates states that different environments produce different physical natures in mankind and uses this theory to explain racial differences. Joosse and Pormann give two different explanations for this fact: the fact that 'Abd al-Laṭīf is concerned with fundamental qualities (opium has a cooling effect both in Greece and Iraq), and the fact he is talking about two adjacent climes (Greek heartland and fertile crescent) according to Ptolemaic division. I would add a third explanation. Here 'Abd al-Laṭīf is speaking about medical epistemology based on universal grounds. In this respect, according to him, Greek medicine is far superior to his contemporaries' practice and must be learned by the physicians of his age according to the principle of accumulation of knowledge which will also guide 'Abd al-Laṭīf's philosophical project.

Faced with the discouraging level, both professional and ethical, of contemporary medicine, 'Abd al-Laṭīf believes it is possible to identify those who are mainly responsible, by examining in the rich people who commission the doctors, princes and the well-off, who, if they are very careful about their own food and choose only vets of proven fame for their horses,

¹⁷⁵ Joosse–Pormann (2010), 12, 28.

do not take any steps to verify the competence of the doctors in their service.¹⁷⁶ According to 'Abd al-Laṭīf, on the other hand, the competence of every doctor should be verified in the same manner it was allegedly verified in an idealized Constantinople, where anyone who wished to practice medicine had to pass an exam and publically take the Hippocratic oath.¹⁷⁷ In the cities of Baghdad, Cairo and Damascus, something like this existed: you could not in fact practice the medical profession without a certificate signed by one of the most famous doctors.¹⁷⁸

In Aleppo, on the other hand, chaos reigned. The doctors' only worry was to earn a quarter of a *dirham*. For money they were willing to put a man's life in danger, prescribing at times a cure without even having seen the patient.¹⁷⁹

I have never witnessed greater neglect of the medical art than in the city of Aleppo. For their (*scil.* the inhabitants') behaviour was extremely bad, and the ways of their physicians were in such a state of corruption that there was nothing viler than this. No power compels them, no religion repels them, no knowledge guides them, and no chief guides and scares them. They have one ambiguous method from which they rarely deviate, namely, if someone complains to them about a disease, they hasten to make him drink a purgative in order to collect quickly its price and take the maximum value for it; they pay no attention to whether it is well cooked and neglect other conditions (*scil.* necessary for preparing remedies). They apply this to someone about whom they had a report without actually seeing him. Their only concern is to pilfer the price of the purgative; they employ all sorts of ruses to do so, and do not care at all how they kill through these means, and they sell a man's life for a farthing (fols 69r 11–69v 1).¹⁸⁰

At this point 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī makes a violent attack on a 'damned devil' doctor from Aleppo, a *Maġribī Ṣayḥ* of Jewish religion who first converted to Islam then returned to the faith of his fathers despite the hostility of the Jewish community. Originally a poor man, he had travelled through many countries in the service of many merchants and only in old age had he learnt medicine. Once he had become a doctor he had been guilty of the worst of crimes because he had deliberately caused the death of his patients. The most clamorous case of this criminal behaviour was

¹⁷⁶ Cf. ms. Bursa, *Hüseyn Çelebi*, 823, fol. 68r 11–13.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Rosenthal (1956), 2–87; Strohmaier (1974), 318–323.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Ullmann (1970), 223–227.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Kahl (2000), for the description of the chaotic medical situation in Damascus, in approximately the same period.

¹⁸⁰ Jousse–Pormann (2010), 16, 28.

the death of Malik al-Zāhir Ġāzī ibn Yūsuf of Aleppo, which happened in 613/1217.¹⁸¹

‘Abd al-Laṭīf does not name this *Mağribī Šayḥ*, but the clues he provides are enough for him to be clearly identified. He is without doubt Abū l-Ḥağğāğ Yūsuf ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ishāq al-Sabtī al-Mağribī, better known as Ibn Šam‘ūn, the favourite pupil of Moses Maimonides’ who dedicated his *Guide of the perplexed* to him, and the close friend of Ibn al-Qiftī, the author of the *History of Doctors (Ta’rīḥ al-Ḥukamā’)*.¹⁸² A native of Fez, he converted to Islam during the Almohad persecutions. He then fled to the East and, after having worked as a merchant for a certain period of time, and practiced medicine in Aleppo. He was one of the doctors of al-Malik al-Zāhir. But ‘Abd-al-Laṭīf’s judgment on Ibn Šam‘ūn must be viewed with caution. We do not possess any other testimony to Ibn Šam‘ūn’s presumed incompetence and his lack of professional ethics.

Concerning ‘Abd-al-Laṭīf’s description of the ethical and professional level of medicine in Aleppo in general, we must evaluate the relevance of other documents from which it would seem that, precisely in Aleppo, politico-religious authority probably made use of the Hippocratic formula to swear in a doctor before he could begin his practice.¹⁸³ Hints to this effect are found in certain manuals addressed to the *muḥtasib* or inspector¹⁸⁴ and in the treatise *Definitive Instruction for the Study of the Inspection of Trades (Nihāyat al-rutba fī ṭalab al-ḥisba)*¹⁸⁵ in particular.

This treatise on *ḥisba* in forty chapters was written for Šalāḥ al-Dīn by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Šayzarī al-Tabrīzī al-Adawī al-Nabarāwī, a doctor and *muḥtasib* of Aleppo who died in 1193. It examines and regulates, in the following order, all the trades of the merchants and the artisans who operated in the city: flour sellers, millers, butchers, sellers of roast meat, liver, salami, and sheeps’ heads, innkeepers, roasters of fish, jam sellers, pharmacists, grocers, perfumers, makers of syrup, vets, phlebotomists, oculists, surgeons, orthopaedists, dairymen, weavers, cloth merchants, dyers, cobblers, moneychangers, goldsmiths, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, slave traders, owners of public baths, inspectors, guardians of mosques, preachers, scribes, astrologers, judges, military commanders,

¹⁸¹ See Joosse (2007), 133–141.

¹⁸² Ibn al-Qiftī, *Ta’rīḥ al-ḥukamā’*, 392–394 Lippert.

¹⁸³ Strohmaier (1993), I.190.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Meyerhof (1944), 119–134. This article is reprinted in Johnstone (1984).

¹⁸⁵ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Naṣr ‘Abd Allāh al-Šayzarī, *Nihāyat al-rutba fī ṭalab al-ḥisba*, al-Arīnī. English translation in Buckley (1999). Cf. Brockelmann (1937), Suppl. I.832; Meyerhof (1944), 119–134.

governors, carpenters, boat owners, potters, makers of needles, nails, and combs, olive and sesame pressers, makers of leather containers, tanners, furriers, makers of mats, merchants of straw and wood, and builders. Each profession is described in detail, the ideal requirements for its practise are specified, and the forms of cheating which have been observed by the *muḥtasib* are indicated.

The treatment of medical and paramedical activities fills five chapters: the *muḥtasib* in question, a doctor by profession, shows particular precision and great competence in his treatment of this profession. In the seventeenth chapter, devoted to the inspection of pharmacists and grocers, al-Šayzarī lists all the forms, naturally prohibited, of counterfeiting the most common medicines.

The nineteenth chapter, on the other hand, speaks of the makers of syrups. The *muḥtasib* is required to know the principles of pharmacology concerning which al-Šayzarī lists some of the fundamental texts.

The thirty-third chapter is devoted to veterinary medicine, which is considered to be more difficult than the medicine which treats men because, not possessing language, animals cannot help the doctor in his diagnosis. There follows the need for a lengthy preparation by veterinary doctors.

The thirty-sixth chapter is devoted to those who practise phlebotomy and the application of leeches and suction cups. If wrongly carried out phlebotomy causes the death of the patient; he who practises it must therefore have a perfect knowledge of the anatomy of the veins, the muscles, and the arteries. He cannot practise it on a slave without first having secured the owner's permission, nor on a young man without the permission of his tutor. Phlebotomy must not be practiced on menstruating or pregnant women. It must take place in clean places with the appropriate, disinfected, instruments. Phlebotomists cannot operate without having received permission from a doctor. Al-Šayzarī continues by prescribing the medicines which phlebotomists must have at hand, the type of incision they must make to the vein and how to aid its healing. He also lists five types of veins and arteries in different parts of the body on which it is possible to practice phlebotomy. Then he moves on to deal with suction cups, the cases in which it is useful to apply them, and the method to be followed.

The thirty-seventh chapter finally is devoted to doctors and, in particular, to oculists (*kaḥḥālūn*), surgeons (*ǧarrāḥūn*) and orthopaedists (*muǧabbirūn*). Al-Šayzarī writes that medicine is a theoretical and a practical science whose exercise has been declared legal by religious law

because medicine deals with the preservation of health and the defence of the human body from diseases and illnesses. A doctor is he who knows the structure of the body, the state of the organs, the illnesses which affect them, their causes, accidents and symptoms, and the remedies effective against these illnesses. He who does not possess this knowledge cannot obtain permission to cure the sick, cannot proceed in a treatment which could be dangerous, and cannot rush forth blindly in those matters in which his knowledge cannot be considered sufficient.

The kings of the Greeks had given the name *archiater* to the most famous doctor in each city for his wisdom, to whom the other doctors of the city were presented in order to take an exam. When he visited a sick person, each doctor had to question him on the cause of his illness and the pain that afflicted him. He then had to write a prescription (*qānūn*) for several syrups and give one copy to the sick man and one to his relatives. He had to return to visit the sick man following the same procedure every day until he recovered or died. In the case of recovery the doctor was paid or received gifts. In the case of death the doctor had to present himself before the *archiater* and submit to him a copy of all the medical prescriptions he had given to the deceased man. If the *archiater* found them to conform to medical science and practice the doctor could take up his profession again, in the case to the contrary, he had to stop practising. The example of the Greeks is to be followed and al-Šayzarī gives the *muḥtasib* the task of making all doctors swear the Hippocratic oath (*‘ahd Buqrāt*) and of making them swear not to prescribe a harmful remedy for any reason, never to prepare or prescribe a poison, never to practice an abortion on a woman, and never to prescribe a man with a medicine which could cause sterility. Furthermore, when entering the house of a sick person, doctors should avert their attention from the *harem* and for no reason divulge confidential information.

Al-Šayzarī goes on to say that the *muḥtasib* must examine the doctors according to the criteria established by *Book on the Examination of the Best Doctors* (*Kitāb fī miḥnat afdal al-aṭibbā’*) by Galen and translated by Ḥunayn.¹⁸⁶ As far as oculists, orthopaedists, and surgeons are concerned, the *muḥtasib* is charged with checking the competence of these specialists, checking that they possess the necessary instruments. The *muḥtasib* must make sure that the oculists know the writings of Ḥunayn on the subject – that is to say, the treatise entitled *On the Structure of the Eye, its Diseases, and their Cure According to the Opinion of Hippocrates and Galen*

¹⁸⁶ Cf. above note 165.

in *Ten Treatises* (*Tarkīb al-‘ayn wa-‘ilalu-hā wa-‘ilāḡu-hā ‘alā ra’y Ibuqrāt wa-Ġālīnūs wa-hiya ‘ašr maqālāt*)¹⁸⁷ – and that they do not produce fake eyewashes. He must make sure that the orthopaedists know the writings of Paul of Aegina on the reduction of fractures and dislocations – that is to say the *Upomnemata*, in Arabic *Kunnāš al-Turaiyā*, a medical encyclopaedia written by Paul of Aegina, a famous seventh-century Alexandrian doctor. The work consists of seven books which were translated into Arabic by Ḥunayn.¹⁸⁸ He must finally check that the surgeons know Galen’s *Qāṭāḡānīs* – that is to say, the *περί συνθέσεως φαρμάκων* or *Kitāb fi Tarkīb al-adwiya*, a treatise of pharmacology which contains a classification of the medicines used in surgery¹⁸⁹ – anatomy, and the circulatory system, in order to avoid wrongly cutting arteries or veins; surgeons must also possess a collection of needles, blades, and saws. In this case, too, the *muḥtasib* must watch over the counterfeiting of medicines against infection, which are prescribed after operations.

The picture of medicine in Aleppo which emerges from this treatise on *ḥisba* written by an author from Aleppo only one generation younger than ‘Abd al-Laṭīf could partially correct or, at least, soften the harsh judgement of our author on the decline of medicine in that city. But we have to keep in mind that *ḥisba* manuals, as al-Šayzarī’s one, are treatises of jurisprudence which describe the ideal and theoretical form in which the various professions must be carried out: a model perhaps never put into practice as such. In addition, *ḥisba* manuals contain civic ordinances, which were created to provide a good impression of the state of affairs at a certain moment in time among the city’s own citizens, visitors and foreigners. Of course, it is also true that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf often exaggerates things. He frequently uses the stylistic device of hyperbole (*mubālaḡa*), to focus the attention towards some problem already existing in society and to stimulate the discussion thereon.

‘Abd al-Laṭīf then moves on by stating that he has dealt with the question of the origin of medicine in another treatise entitled *On the Initiator of the Art of Medicine* (*Maqāla fi al-bādi’ bi-šinā’a al-ṭibb*):¹⁹⁰ medicine was born when the human race felt the need of it and God was concerned for there to be someone to renew it every time it declined. For this reason Hippocrates’ medicine renewed the medical science of his predecessor

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Sezgin (1970), 247–256, and in particular 251–252.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Sezgin (1970), 168–170; Ullmann (1970), 86–87.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Sezgin (1970), 68–140, 118–120; Ullmann (1970), 48–49.

¹⁹⁰ Ibn Abi Uṣaybi’a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, II, 211.32 Müller.

Asclepiades and it was in turn renewed by that of Galen. The last Islamic doctor worthy of being mentioned among these great men of the past was Abū Ġāfar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Ašʿaṭ (d. 360/970) at least two of whose treatises are summarised by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf: the *Book of Animals* (*Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*) and the *Book of Colic, the Types of Colic, and its Cure* (*Kitāb al-Qūlanġ wa-aṣnāfi-hi wa-mudāwāti-hi*).¹⁹¹

Contemporary doctors, on the other hand, memorize a few sections of the *Generalities* (*Kulliyāt*) of Avicenna’s *Canon*,¹⁹² declaim them loudly during their discussions and, with this, believe that they are sufficiently prepared to cure illnesses.

Those who occupy themselves at this time with medicine usually read a bit in the *Generalities* of the *Canon*. Then they learn by heart the definition of medicine, the definition of the element, the definition of temperament and the like. They have disputes about it (these definitions), and, on this subject, they raise their voices in assemblies and markets. Afterwards, they proceed to treat (patients) in the (false) opinion that this (alone, i.e. basic book learning) is beneficial and suffices, and that he who knows the definition of medicine correctly is able to cure (patients) of fevers and other (diseases), and knows their different kinds. I admonish those who take my advice, if they want to be physicians, not to abandon Galen’s and Hippocrates’ books (fol. 73v 1–7).¹⁹³

According to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, contemporary doctors do not realize that they must base their study on the works of Galen and Hippocrates.

If he wants to read works by recent authors to learn the extent of the scholars’ knowledge, their different abilities in understanding, the quality of their abridgments and explanations, then so be it. Those, however, who think that the *Royal* (Book by al-Maġūsī), the *Hundred Books* (by al-Masiḥī), and the *Canon* (by Avicenna) suffice and make Galen’s works superfluous adhere to a false opinion (fols 73v 17–74r 3).¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, II.213.7–8 Müller; Brockelmann (1943), 272; Brockelmann (1937), Suppl. I.422; Sezgin (1970), 301–302, 378; Kruk (2008).

¹⁹² The *Canon of Medicine* (*Qānūn fi l-tibb*), Avicenna’s exhaustive *summa* of medical knowledge in five books – the first part, the *Kulliyāt* (*Generalities*) concern the principle medical doctrines, illnesses and their symptoms, norms of hygiene and prophylaxis, and therapy – was the source of various treatises concerning particular questions which, even though small, circulated widely: for instance, those on the circulation, pharmacopoeia and particular studies on remedies, such as the chicory and *oxymel*. For the editions of the work and commentaries on it in the various Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin traditions, translations, a bibliography of secondary literature, and its fortune, see Janssens (1970–1989), 26–35. Cf. also Ullmann (1970), 152–156; Sanagustin (1986), 84–122; Siraisi (1987).

¹⁹³ Joosse–Pormann (2010), 21.

¹⁹⁴ Joosse–Pormann (2010), 21.

Galen's superiority in fact can easily be seen by comparing his treatises with the corresponding sections from Avicenna's *Canon*. According to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, it is not sufficient that contemporary doctors study the compendia of Galen's works, the *Book of Hundred* (*Kitāb al-Mī'a fī al-ṣinā'a al-ṭibbiyya*), the medical encyclopaedia by Abū Sahl al-Masīhī¹⁹⁵ organized into a hundred sections, or the *Kunnāš* by Ibn Sarābiyūn.¹⁹⁶

It is useful to discuss this part of the *Kitāb al-Naṣīhatayn* because in their analysis of this text Joosse and Pormann observe the same fact that I have observed independently by studying the following part, i.e. the philosophical part of the *Kitāb al-Naṣīhatayn*, and even more the *Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*. Joosse and Pormann observe that “the thirteenth century is often perceived as the beginning of the end: through the rise of religious orthodoxy and bigotry, the sciences were hampered, philosophy stifled, and practical medicine neglected”.¹⁹⁷ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf shows that in the thirteenth century science, philosophy, and both medical practice and theory could be highly innovative. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī emerges as a shrewd social critic and a sharp commentator on the contemporary medical mores, and shows an anti-Avicennian slant in medicine. He considers it necessary to return to the Greek sources. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf will show quite the same attitude in philosophy, as we see in the next paragraph.

2.2. *The Polemic Against Contemporary Philosophy: Plato's and Aristotle's Method*¹⁹⁸

After investigating medicine, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī turns his attention to philosophy (fol. 78v). Those who, in his age, devote themselves to philosophy are even worse than the contemporary physicians for many different reasons: their lack of interest, the obscurity of philosophy and their lack of training and good teachers. But the main reason for the decline

¹⁹⁵ Abū Sahl ‘Isā ibn Yahyā al-Masīhī al-Ġurġānī (d. 401/1010 c.) studied in Baghdad and lived and worked first in Ḥurāsān and then in Ḥuwārizm. Historians of Arabic medicine describe him as one of the best Arab-Christian doctors, but his interests ranged to physics and mathematics, theology and philosophy, as well as medicine. He was Avicenna's master and some of Avicenna's writings are in fact dedicated to him: his encyclopaedic treatise of medicine in one hundred sections, the *Kitāb al-Mī'a fī l-ṣinā'a al-ṭibbiyya* was perhaps the model for Avicenna's *Qānūn*. Cf. Sezgin (1970), 326–327; Ullmann (1970), 151; al-Karmī (1978), 270–290.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Sezgin (1970), 240–242; Ullmann (1970), 102–103.

¹⁹⁷ Joosse–Pormann (2010), 23.

¹⁹⁸ I am presently preparing the complete edition and translation of this philosophical part of the *Kitāb al-Naṣīhatayn*. In this paragraph I will limit myself to present some crucial passages in translation.

that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf sees in contemporary philosophical production lies in the neglect into which the works of the Ancients have fallen. The pages of these works are by now being used by bookbinders and pharmacists as paper for packaging (78v11).

No one – says ‘Abd al-Laṭīf – wants to deny the contributions made by Avicenna to philosophical research. He has, in fact, provided new energy and stimulus to philosophy, and he has been able in part to understand the books of the Ancients and to offer an introduction to them. Nevertheless, if we examine his works in more detail and we compare them with those on similar themes by ancient authors and, in particular, with Aristotle or al-Fārābī, the inferiority of Avicenna’s works emerges, as we have already seen in the field of medicine. For this reason ‘Abd al-Laṭīf proposes presenting the method followed by Plato and Aristotle in their relative philosophies first of all, and then that of Avicenna, and, finally, explaining the reasons for his own progressive distancing from Avicenna’s philosophy (fol. 8ov 6–9).

In presenting the thought of Plato and Aristotle, he follows al-Fārābī, and summarizes and quotes al-Fārābī’s *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*¹⁹⁹ or, more precisely, his *Falsafat Aflātūn wa-ağzā’u-hā wa-marātib ağzā’i-hā min awwali-hā ilā āḥiri-hā* (*The Philosophy of Plato, its Parts, and the Order of its Parts from the Beginning to the End*)²⁰⁰ and the *Falsafat Aristūṭālīs wa-ağzā’ falsafati-hi wa-marātib ağzā’i-hi wa-l-mawḍi’ alladī min-hu ibtada’a wa-ilayhi intahā* (*The Philosophy of Aristotle, the Parts of his Philosophy, the Order of its Parts, the Point from Which He Begins and That Which He Arrives At*),²⁰¹ where both Platonic dialogues and Aristotelian treatises are set out in such an order as to constitute a systematic and progressive investigation of all the areas of philosophical research. This work by al-Fārābī must have enjoyed great notoriety and success in learned Islamic circles in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Ṣā’id al-Andalusī, well-known historian of science a generation younger than ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, defines this work by al-Fārābī as “a treatise on the intentions of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle”²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Cf. the edition in Rosenthal–Walzer (1943) and in Mahdi (1961), and the English translation in Mahdi (1962). In the preface to the second edition of this translation Mahdi stresses the importance of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s paraphrase (ms. Bursa, *Hüseyin Çelebi*, 823, fols 70v-87v) for the study of al-Fārābī’s text: cf. Mahdi (1969), vi. For this reason in my translation I have tried, as much as possible, to use the same vocabulary and constructions presented in Mahdi (1962), because this will render immediately clear to the reader how ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s paraphrase is close to al-Fārābī’s text.

²⁰⁰ Cf. the edition in Rosenthal–Walzer (1943) and the English translation in (Mahdi) 1962.

²⁰¹ Cf. the edition in Mahdi (1961) and the English translation in (Mahdi) 1962.

²⁰² Ṣā’id al-Andalusī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, 53.14 Cheikhō.

and speaking in particular of the section of the work relating to the philosophy of Aristotle, writes:

Al-Fārābī follows this [i.e. the philosophy of Plato] with the philosophy of Aristotle, and he introduces it with a preface worthy of note in which he clarifies how Aristotle proceeds step by step in his philosophy. He then moves on to describe Aristotle's intention in each of his logical and natural treatises. In the copy which reached our hands he ends his exposition at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, after reaching it by way of natural science. I know of no treatise more useful than this for the student of philosophy, since it makes known the ideas common to all the sciences and those pertinent to each of them.²⁰³

‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī begins, first of all, with a presentation of Plato's philosophy and he briefly summarizes the section *Falsafat Aflātūn*.²⁰⁴ In this, the exposition of Plato's thought begins with an investigation of what constitutes the perfection of man as man. According to al-Fārābī this does not consist of a healthy physique, a pleasant face, noble descent, a large group of friends and lovers; nor does it consist in riches, glory, or power, since none of this is able to make man fully and truly happy. For man, as Plato says in his *Alcibiades*, the attainment of happiness consists in a particular type of knowledge – described in the *Theaetetus* as the knowledge of the essence of each being – and a certain lifestyle – described in the *Philebus* as the virtuous life. On fols 80v 9–81r 1, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf summarizes al-Fārābī's *incipit* without, however, mentioning the titles of the dialogues.

Concerning the philosophy of Plato, may he be exalted, it follows the order and the hierarchy in which we expose it (now). He started to investigate the perfection of human beings by finding that for every being there is a perfection which is proper to it. For this reason he went on looking for this perfection and found that it is a certain knowledge and a certain way of life which is not riches, honour, beauty or other similar things. Then he investigated what this knowledge is and found that it is the knowledge of the substances of all the beings, and he found that this knowledge is the nobler between the two perfections of the human being which constitute his happiness or by which he obtains his happiness. He investigated what this happiness is, and it became clear to him which kind of knowledge it is, which state of character it is, and which act it is. He distinguished it from what is believed to be happiness but is not. And he made it known that the virtuous way of life and true knowledge are the things which lead to the achievement of this happiness. Then he investigated whether it is possible to attain this knowledge

²⁰³ Ibidem, 53.17–54.1.

²⁰⁴ This section is quoted by Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 255.12–13 Flügel.

and this way of life, and he stated that it is not possible to attain them by chance or by investigation, but by instruction and study (fol. 80v 9–17).²⁰⁵

After having identified that particular type of knowledge and that particular conduct which constitute the perfection and, hence, the happiness of man, al-Fārābī's work continues with a long discussion – practically absent in 'Abd al-Laṭīf – of the means by which man can arrive at knowledge of the essence of beings and the virtuous life. According to al-Fārābī, unlike Protagoras and Meno, Plato believes that man is not incapable of certain knowledge and that he does not know what he knows only by nature and by chance. Indeed man can attain knowledge of the essence of each being as long as he carries out his research according to a precise method. For this reason, al-Fārābī pauses at length to present the various methods described by Plato in his dialogues: the method of religious speculation presented in the *Euthyphro*,²⁰⁶ that of the science of language discussed in the *Cratylus*, that of poetry defined as misleading with respect to the knowledge sought in the *Ion*, that of rhetoric in the *Gorgias*, that of sophistry which Plato criticises in the *Sophist* and the *Euthydemus*, and, finally, the dialectic method of the *Parmenides*. Only this latter, al-Fārābī believes, was considered by Plato to be necessary, but not sufficient, to arrive at the knowledge sought. 'Abd al-Laṭīf in contrast merely mentions the method of rhetoric and that of dialectic (81r 2–3).

The fact that the dialectic method presented in the *Parmenides* was considered by al-Fārābī's Plato to be necessary for knowledge of the essence of beings by man, but not enough for man to attain happiness, brings us to the core of al-Fārābī's view of Plato's philosophy and the reason for its value. The conflict which al-Fārābī discusses, in presenting his Plato, is that between theoretical knowledge and its realization, between knowing a thing in truth and actualising what is known, that is, bringing it to exist in actuality among men, cities, and nations. There clearly emerges in al-Fārābī an awareness that knowledge of things according to their

²⁰⁵ The translation is mine. Cf. Rosenthal–Walzer (1943), 3.4–6.2; Mahdi (1962), 53–55.

²⁰⁶ Here it is interesting to observe that Socrates' discussion of what is holy and its opposite has become in al-Fārābī an investigation of the method which characterizes the traditional Koranic disciplines of dialectic theology (*kalām*) and law (*fiqh*), that is to say, the syllogistic art used by the theologian-jurists. Al-Fārābī speaks specifically of *fiqh* and *kalām* and their method in the fifth chapter of his treatise *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm* or *Enumeration of the Sciences* (cf. above chap. I, 69–72) devoted to the science of politics (al-*ʿilm al-madani*), the science of law (*ʿilm al-fiqh*) and the science of dialectic theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*). Cf. Rosenthal–Walzer (1943), 7.15 (*textus arabicus*); Mahdi (2001), 141 note 7.1; Mahdi, (1968), 22–27, 67–76; cf. Mahdi (1975), 113–147. Regarding the order of development of the various syllogistic arts cf. Mahdi (1972a), 5–25. This study is also found in Mahdi (1993), 81–103.

essence is not an end in itself, but is that which must characterize the virtuous lifestyle of the philosopher: in him, in fact, theoretical knowledge is the *prolegomenon* to action, ethics, and politics.²⁰⁷ This theme is also crucial for ʿAbd al-Laṭīf.

Al-Fārābī's argumentation is long and complex. He initially affirms that in the *Theages*, Plato identifies the knowledge of the essence of each being with philosophy, and in the *Lovers* he defines philosophy not simply as a good thing but as something useful and necessary for human beings, and he writes that the lifestyle that leads man to happiness is the life of the philosopher characterized by the virtues of temperance (*Charmides*), courage (*Laches*), and friendship.²⁰⁸ Then al-Fārābī stresses that the life of the philosopher implies, besides devotion to theoretical science, politics as its greatest expression in the practical sphere. He finally notes that the task of the philosopher is to continue to search for the truth and to practise the virtuous life without bending to the opinions and vices of the majority of his fellow citizens. Indeed, death is preferable to a life which through ignorance and vice is worse than that of the beasts and a life without the search for perfection is not worthy of being lived. Socrates prefers death rather than bend himself to the false conformism of his city.²⁰⁹

ʿAbd al-Laṭīf concentrates his attention on these latter statements. He stresses that not only is there no difference between a man who lives in ignorance and the life of beasts and that death is preferable to a life in this ruinous situation, but even that in ignorance man acts like a beast. A life in ignorance is a life without the search for truth and, hence, inhuman in itself.

He explained what the things are through the knowledge of which man becomes a philosopher. Then he explained that these things are not among the generally accepted arts, nor is the truly virtuous way of life generally accepted among nations and cities of his time. Then he explained that the request and the search for this way of life are necessary for the man who is looking to become a philosopher, otherwise he will attain only what is among the bad and vicious ways of life and he will be satisfied with it. Or he will prefer security and an ignorant life, a bad and base way of life, and bad actions. He explained that there is no difference between a man who lives with ignorance and a man who lives according to this bad and base way of life; he explained that this way of life is both like being a beast and being

²⁰⁷ Cf. Mahdi (1981), 3–21.

²⁰⁸ In al-Fārābī's text the reference to the *Lysis* is missing: cf. Rosenthal–Walzer (1943), 21.1–3 (*textus arabicus*).

²⁰⁹ In his text, al-Fārābī seems here to confuse the *Crito* with the *Apology*: cf. Rosenthal–Walzer (1943), 17.5–6 (*textus arabicus*), 23–24.

worse than a beast, and that the bestial way of life is worse than death; he explained that death ought to be preferred to the base and vicious life and that a vicious life leads a man only to perform bestial activities or activities worse than bestial. And there is no difference between a man who possesses utter bestiality and his death and metamorphosis into that beast and its appearance. There is no difference between a man who acts like a fish and a fish with the appearance of a man. There is no virtue in it except that his form is the form of man, but concerning his action, his actions are those of a beast in its most complete state. And he is a man only insofar as he uses calculation in performing the activity of that beast. He explained that the more perfectly one performs the activity of that beast, the further he is from being human. For this reason, he thought that the life of a man who does not search for truth is not a human life (fols 81r 4–81v 3).²¹⁰

In this perspective 'Abd al-Laṭīf briefly introduces Plato's political philosophy. Since the perfection of the soul is possible only in a city where justice reigns, Plato starts from analysis of what justice is and how it ought to be. Then Plato examines the cities which deviate from the good ways of life and from the philosophical virtues.

In the virtuous city, man must be educated in the knowledge of the divine and natural beings and in following a virtuous way of life. Human perfection is achieved by the man who combines the theoretical, the political and the practical sciences. He will rule and he will possess the ability to conduct a scientific investigation of justice and the other virtues and to form the character of the youth and the multitude. He will be able to correct wrong opinions and to cure every rank of his society with knowledge. The ruler will be the one who has achieved human perfection in its utmost degree.

Since the perfection of the soul appears only in the just city, he started to investigate what justice is, how it ought to be, and how it ought to be put in concrete in the cities, and he investigated the diseases of the cities as concerning their deviation from the good ways of life and from the philosophical virtues. However, since the health of a city belongs to it as do the virtues established in it, then it is necessary to investigate the divine and natural beings in the knowledge and the confirmation of which the inhabitants of the virtuous city ought to develop. And the inhabitants of the virtuous city must become accustomed to the speculation about these beings and their investigation. They must analyze what is unclear in these beings, they must discover it. And he explained the virtuous way of life that the inhabitants of this city ought to follow. Then he explained what perfection reaches the man who combines the theoretical sciences with the political and the

²¹⁰ Cf. in Rosenthal–Walzer (1943), 16.11–19.4; Mahdi (2001), 62–64.

practical sciences. And he explained that he who is appointed as ruler, in order to be clearly distinguished as such, by his training and in his education, must possess the ability to conduct a scientific investigation of justice and the other virtues, and he must possess the ability to form the character of youth, the multitude and the classes of nations which desire education. And he must also have the ability to transmit to the man among them who follows a vicious way of life a measure which destroys the corrupt opinions in him and to the man among them who is accustomed to bad actions, knowledge of a cure for every division among them. Every rank of the city will receive the cure for what is useful and convenient for it: this is human perfection to the utmost degree (fol. 81v 3–17).

Finally, at the end of his account, 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī explains that Plato has set out his system in more than fifty dialogues which are grouped into tetralogies. The exposition of Plato's philosophy ends with al-Fārābī's summary of the last tetralogy (fol. 82r 2–6). Then he mentions the *Republic*, the *Timaeus* and the *Laws* and gives the summary of the contents of each dialogue.

In his account of Aristotle's philosophy, 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī follows and uses quotations from al-Fārābī's *Falsafat Aristūṭālīs*; the title is quoted at the beginning of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's account

'Abd al-Laṭīf begins, in fact, by faithfully quoting the *incipit* of al-Fārābī's account of Aristotelian philosophy:

Aristotle sees the perfection of man as Plato sees it, but adds more. However, because man's perfection is not self-evident or easy to explain, he saw fit to start from a position anterior to that from which Plato had started. He saw the first four things which everyone desires: the soundness of the body, and the senses, the capacity for being distinguished, and the power to work towards it. Then he discovered that the soul desires to understand the causes of sensible things, and to know the truth of everything which insinuates itself into the soul and comes to the mind. Now such things do not belong to these four. He discovered that when man understands any of these causes, it happens that he find it pleasant and delights in it. The firmer his knowledge is, the greater his rejoicing will be and his pleasure in what he understands. And he comes to the view that he possesses, because of this apprehension, a certain excellence and exalted position, although someone else does not come to know because of his own condition, and he wonders and marvels about what he understands, especially with regard to such things as are not likely to be known and are difficult to understand (fol. 82v 4–14).²¹¹

Al-Fārābī's Aristotle holds that the perfection of man sought by Plato is not self-evident or easy to explain by way of a demonstration which leads

²¹¹ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 59.4–60.16, Mahdi (2001), 71–72.

to certainty. He believes, therefore, that it is necessary to start with a prior consideration. There are four things which by nature are desired by man in so far as they are good: the soundness of the body, the soundness of the senses, the soundness of the ability to discern that which leads to the health of the body and the senses, and the soundness of the ability to obtain that which leads to their soundness. In the second place man desires to know the causes of the sensible things and also the causes of what he sees in his soul, and he discovers that the more he knows the more he feels pleasure. Thus – as ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī writes, following al-Fārābī (fols 82v 13–83r 1) – according to Aristotle, the knowledge sought by man can be said to be of two types: the first is a useful knowledge sought for the soundness of the body, of the senses, and of the other two abilities, the second is desired and desirable in itself for the pleasure that a man experiences in apprehending, for instance, the myths or the stories of nations.²¹²

‘Abd al-Laṭīf, like al-Fārābī, goes on by explaining that in human knowledge there are three sorts of cognitions: those acquired by senses, frequently insufficient, those first necessary cognitions that originate with man, and those acquired by investigation and consideration.

He explained that man cannot find the useful things, or how to labour at them, or with what to labour, without knowing the end for the sake of which he labours and without having that end defined and present before him. It is well-known that man labors for the soundness of those four things. Perhaps these four things together are the end, or only one of these things is the end and the others are servants such as when we say that the soundness of the body is because of the senses or that the senses are intended for the sake of the soundness of the body, and every case is analyzed. If these four things or only one of these are the end and this is also the case of the animals, then man is no different from animals, nor he is superior, and what has been ascribed to him concerning the desire to know the causes of what he desires and of what comes to his mind remains something useless and futile, a disease and a torture inflicted by nature and, in the same way, what has been put in him concerning deliberation, selection, reasoning and uncovering (fol. 83r 8–17).²¹³

‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī asks himself what type of knowledge is most appropriate for man. Animals, too, in fact, have a body, senses, and the

²¹² On the classification of the sciences in Aristotle cf. the following passages from his works: *Top.* VI 6, 145a15–16, *Top.* VIII 1, 157a10–11, *Metaph.* a 1, 993b 20–21, *Metaph.* E 1, 1025 b 18–25, *Metaph.* Λ 9, 1075a 1–2; on al-Fārābī’s classification of the sciences capable of uniting the Aristotelian one with that specific to the Arabic-Islamic tradition, cf. above chapter 1, 69–72.

²¹³ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 63.11–66.6, Mahdi (2001), 75–77.

ability to discern how and with what to safeguard their health. They do not, however, possess the desire, provoked by wonder, to know the causes of what can be seen in the heavens and on earth.

This problem involves the following question: why ever should man desire to know causes if the type of knowledge that they involve is not made for him? It is because man can grow in perfection knowing the causes; indeed, knowing the causes is an act of the essence of man. Yet this statement opens up a series of problems. What is the essence of man, what is his ultimate perfection, what is the act whose realization leads to the final perfection of his essence? Nevertheless, given that man is part of the world, if we wish to know the end of man and his activity we must first know the world in its totality. The four causes of the world in its totality and in each of its individual parts must be sought.

He ought to inquire what is the end that is the ultimate perfection of man, whether it is his substance or an act he performs after his substance is realized, and whether it is realized for him by nature or whether nature supplies him only with a material and a preparation for this perfection and a principle or an instrument to use in reaching this ultimate perfection. Is then the soundness of his body and senses the soundness of what renders him substantial? Or is this absurd, since this is in common with the other animals? Or are they both a preparation and an instrument for what renders him substantial insofar as he is a man? You will know the ultimate human perfection and the act which leads to it, only if you know the degree of man into being. Since man is a part of the world, and we wish to understand his purpose, activity, use and place, first we have to know generally the purpose of the totality of the world, so that the purpose of man, in particular, will appear to us in the same way that it is clear to us that we know the purpose of a finger only if we know the purpose of a hand in general. Therefore, if we wish to know the thing for which man labours, we have to know the purpose of man and of the human perfection for which we ought to labour. For this end we are forced to know the purpose of the totality of the world, and we cannot know this without knowing all the parts of the world and their principles – by knowing the *what* of every part of it, the *how*, the *from what* and the *for what* (fols 83r 17–83v 14).²¹⁴

The expression used by al-Fārābī to designate the search for the causes, perfectly reproduced by ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī (fol. 83v 13–14), is the following: *mā huwa wa-kayfa huwa wa-ʿammā-dā wa-li-mā-dā*, that is to say, *what it is, how it is, what it is from, and what it is for*.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 67.13–69.6, Mahdi (2001), 78–80.

²¹⁵ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 69.5–6.

Most of the parts of the world are natural, and the others are voluntary. Man does not achieve the perfection which is proper to him by nature alone, but also by will. For this reason we have to investigate the way of life which attains this perfection, which must be preferred, and the way of life which turns man away from this perfection, which must be avoided. Because what is by nature precedes what is by will in time, the investigation of what is by nature must be prior.

And since in all that man tries to know, he is trying to possess a certain science, Aristotle must investigate this science. It is possible to know the certain science only if one knows all the classes of sciences and distinguishes among them the certain and what is close to the certain and what, on the contrary, is far from it or what is similar to the certain and it is its image, or what offers the peace of the soul. And Aristotle presents logic and its eight parts in the natural order and in the necessary disposition. The sciences become three: the science of natural things, the science of voluntary things and the science of logic. For it improves the rational part of the soul and directs it towards the certain and the useful. Logic is the lead of the other two sciences and examines them (fols 83v 14–84r 8).²¹⁶

The investigation which deals with the world, in its totality and in each of its individual parts, is called natural investigation, while that which regards what man possesses by virtue and will is called the science of the things that depend on the will. Since that which is natural and innate in man precedes in time that which is in man by will and choice, the first type of investigation will precede the second even if both must arrive at a certain science. Besides these two types of research is the art of logic which forms the rational part of the soul, leads it to certainty, to study and to research; logic, moreover, guides and tests the validity of the other two fields of research.

At this point in al-Fārābī's text there is a lengthy treatment of Aristotelian logic, in which he examines all the treatises of the *Organon*. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī on the contrary, presents a brief summary in only six lines and mentions one treatise on Aristotelian logic, entitled *Kitāb al-Qiyās*.²¹⁷ 'Abd al-Laṭīf states that the preference accorded to this book is due to the fact that he wanted to present the purpose, the end, and the contents of Aristotelian logic.

²¹⁶ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 69.8–72.3, Mahdi (2001), 80–82.

²¹⁷ Cf. Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafāyāt*, II.387.13 'Abbās, where we find among the works attributed to 'Abd al-Laṭīf a text entitled *Maqāla fī l-qiyās* and another *Kitāb fī l-qiyās*; Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II. 212.30–31 Müller; 695.25 Nizār Riḍā, where in the list of works by 'Abd al-Laṭīf we read "*Kitāb fī l-qiyās*, in fifty quires, belonging to it *al-Madhāl (Isagoge)*, *al-Maqūlāt (Categories)*, *al-Ibāra (De Interpretatione)*, *al-Burhān (Posterior Analytics)* and its extension covers four volumes".

He enumerated in the *Kitāb al-Qiyās* everything used in any investigation and reasoning in every rational art. He explained that all the rules used in investigation and reasoning are included in what he had enumerated in this book. Then he explained that all the best arguments are included in what has been mentioned in this book – without any exception whichever class of argument may be, whether the argument is intended for instruction or sophistry—. ²¹⁸ I accorded preference to this book among the parts of logic since I explained the purpose of logic, the aim of it, and its contents (fols 84r 9–15). When he had finished with the logic and its parts he set upon natural science [...].

‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī then turns to natural science. In this case, too, al-Fārābī’s treatment is merely mentioned. The only aspect which was highlighted is that which deals with the method used by Aristotle for the science of nature. According to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, in his analysis of the evident premises of natural science, Aristotle makes use of the dialectic method until he reaches the point beyond which the dialectic faculty is not longer able to proceed. He then evaluates these same premises according to a properly scientific demonstrative method, preserving those which satisfy all the requirements proper to premises that lead to certainty and placing them as the basis of demonstration. As for the other, he leaves them, as they are in his book, as a warning to those who will lead the investigation of nature after him and will have to deal with the matter, the method of investigation, and the use of the dialectic faculty (fols 84r 16–84v 10). ²¹⁹

Moreover, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf reminds us that in Aristotle’s science of nature the fundamental epistemological criterion holds that man must start from what is attested to by the senses and appears, to then proceed to what is hidden, until he knows everything which he desires to know. For this reason, in the study of plants and animals, Aristotle first catalogues the species of plants, describes their visible parts and the function of their organs, and studies their generative processes. Then he devotes himself to the study of animals. He catalogues their species, and explains the apparatus of organs which each animal species is provided with. Since organs alone are not sufficient to explain animal life, man feels the need to introduce a further principle, which is the soul (fols 84v 10–85r 1).

Aristotle analyzes in general the functions, the effects, and the capacities of the soul. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, resuming al-Fārābī’s statements, claims that the essence of the animate natural substance is constituted by the soul,

²¹⁸ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 74.10–14, Mahdi (2001), 84.

²¹⁹ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 91.14–92.1, Mahdi (2001), 98.

just as the essence of the natural substance is constituted by nature.²²⁰ There are, in fact, two types of natural bodies. One is made entirely substantial by nature and a second is made substantial by the soul after having been prepared by nature.²²¹ Nevertheless, the soul is not a principle sufficient to explain man, since the actions of man reveal themselves to be more powerful than the acts of the soul. The soul is not enough to explain the highest degree of substantiality reached by man. 'Abd al-Laṭīf, like al-Fārābī, makes the following example: Aristotle found man with speech and speech proceeds from intellect or the intellectual principles and powers (fols 85r 1–85v 3).²²²

We thus come to an investigation of the Intellect and, just as for the soul and nature, Aristotle examines what the Intellect is as he had investigated what the soul is and what nature is.

He found that the intellect is in potency and then it moves to act. All which passes from potency to act necessitates a proximate agent of the same species as the thing that passes on to act.²²³ He perceived the existence of the Active Intellect which is always in act and had never been potential. When human intellect achieves its ultimate perfection, its substance comes close to being the substance of this Active Intellect. In achieving its perfection, the human intellect follows the example of this Intellect, since it is the act to the highest [degree] by which man becomes substantial. This intellect is also man's end because it is that which gave him a principle with which to labour toward perfection and an example to follow in what he labours at, until he comes to it as he possibly can. It is, then, his agent, his end and his perfection because of the proximity to the substance through which man becomes substantial. Hence it is a principle in three different respects: as an agent, as an end, and as perfection. It is, therefore, a separate form of man, a separate end, and a separate agent; in some manner, man becomes united with the Intellect when it is intellected by him. And so the human soul exists for the sake of this Intellect; the nature by which man acquires what is natural to him is for the sake of the soul only (fols 85v 5–85v 17).²²⁴

The human intellect is in potency and moves to act. All that which passes from potency to act necessitates an agent of the same species as the thing that must pass on to the act. The intellect as well, therefore, in order to pass from potency to act, needs an active intellect which is always in act and never in potency. When man's intellect reaches extreme perfection, it

²²⁰ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 114.13–15; Mahdi (2001), 116.

²²¹ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 115.8–11; Mahdi (2001), 117.

²²² Cf. Mahdi (1961), 121.3–122.11; Mahdi (2001), 121–122.

²²³ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 127.18–128.2; Mahdi (2001), 126–127.

²²⁴ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 128.7–129.4; Mahdi (2001), 127.

comes close in its substance to the substance of this active intellect. In its search for perfection, man's intellect tries to imitate the model of this intellect, since it is that which makes man substantial in so far as he is man. This intellect is also man's end because it is that which provides him with a principle and an example to follow in tending to perfection, which consists in approximating himself as far as possible to it. It is therefore his agent, his end, and his perfection. Therefore it is a principle in three different ways: as an agent, as an end, and as the perfection to which man tends. It is, however, a separate form with respect to man, a separate agent, and a separate end (but in some way man becomes united to it when he is made object of intellection by it).

‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī then follows al-Fārābī's Aristotle and turns to investigate the celestial bodies.

It had become evident to him (*scil.* Aristotle) that the heavenly bodies are not sufficient in achieving their perfection without the Active Intellect, and it had become evident with respect to what acquires its perfection from the Active Intellect, that its movement is supplied by nature and the soul with the assistance of the heavenly bodies. Furthermore, many things possessing a soul supply a soul to the materials they encounter, provided these materials are equipped by nature [to receive it]. Then he passed on to investigate what supplied the form of the species, whether the heavenly bodies and the Active Intellect together, or whether the Active Intellect supplied only the form and the heavenly bodies supplied the movements of matters. Then he devoted himself to other investigations, higher than the previous, and it became clear to him that there are other instances of being which were not encompassed by the ten categories, which he took as a principle of logic, and which are the object of natural science: and these beings are the Active Intellect and the thing that supplied the heavenly bodies with circular motion. Therefore he had to inquire into the beings in a more universal way than natural theory, and here the natural investigation ends (fols 85v 17–86r 12).²²⁵

Concluding his account of Aristotle's philosophy, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī derives from al-Fārābī's account a personal observation, which we will see repeated in his criticism of Avicenna's philosophy.²²⁶ In the canon of Aristotle's works the *De Anima* (*Kitāb al-Nafs*) must be studied after the *Book of the Animals* (*Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*)²²⁷ so as not to contravene the Aristotelian epistemological criterion which prescribes to begin to inquire what is known to arrive at what is not known, because it is hidden

²²⁵ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 129.11–130.18; Mahdi (2001), 128–129.

²²⁶ Cf. below 180–188.

²²⁷ Cf. below 180–181.

(fol 86r 12–15). Moreover, quoting al-Fārābī, he introduces the following reflection on this point.

The sum of the preceding inquiry had led to the conclusion that the nature which is in man, and the human soul, the powers and the act of these two together with the practical intellectual powers are all for the perfection of the theoretical intellect; and nature and the human intellect are insufficient without the acts generated from volition and choice, both of which adhere to the practical intellect. Therefore, he had also to investigate the acts generated from the will, volition, and choice, which adhere to the practical intellect – for it is these that make up the human will. This is because impulse adhering to sense perception and discernment which is possessed by other animals are neither human nor useful for achieving human perfection. No other animal, in fact, is equipped to achieve theoretical perfection. Therefore, he had to investigate all the acts generated from volition and choice. For choice means the will that adheres to the practical intellect; therefore comparable things in other animals are [not]²²⁸ called choice. On that account, he had to inquire into, and to investigate, the acts generated from these, and he distinguished the acts useful for the ultimate purpose from those that obstruct the way to it. He had to investigate also the natural things, whether instruments or a material, useful in making up these acts. Hence he had to look into, as well, also the animate substances among animals and plants, and to select those of them that contribute to the acts leading or proceeding to human perfection. He had to investigate, in addition, the other natural beings – whether stones, minerals, or elements – and to select what is useful and likewise to select also those useful things among them that have the heavenly bodies as their causes. As a matter of fact one finds in every plant and animal an object of doubt, which, if examined, will be not dissipated by natural science or by the human science without which man completes the investigation of the beings which are above the elements in their rank. Thus, he had to give precedence to that inquiry in order to achieve a more perfect knowledge of natural things and complete the natural philosophy and the human philosophy which we lacked (fols 86r 15–87r 2).²²⁹

The result of the enquiry undertaken leads to the conclusion that human nature, the human soul, and the capabilities and the acts of these two, just like the capabilities of the practical intellect, are all finalized with respect to the perfection of the human intellect. Nature, the soul, and the human intellect are, however, insufficient to attain perfection and it is not possible not to consider the acts generated by volition and choice which depend on the practical intellect. For this reason, therefore, these acts must also become the object of investigation like all that which constitutes

²²⁸ I supply the negation which is not present in the text of the manuscript.

²²⁹ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 130.18–132.1; Mahdi (2001), 129–130.

human will. Desire and the things which depend on sense and discernment – which the other animals also possess – on the other hand, are neither human, nor useful for attaining theoretical perfection. According to this criterion it is necessary to re-examine completely all the scientific fields already established in the search for that which contributes to the attainment of perfection by man and that which, on the other hand, impedes this search.

Finally, quoting again al-Fārābī, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī mentions the *Metaphysics* without presenting its contents, merely saying that in the work by Aristotle called precisely *Metaphysics* beings are investigated according to a different method from that used in the science of nature (fol. 87v 2–4).²³⁰ Then ‘Abd al-Laṭīf quotes the final passage of al-Fārābī’s text:

It has become evident from all the preceding that for the perfection of man it is necessary to investigate, and to inquire into, the intelligibles that cannot be utilized for the soundness of bodies and the soundness of the senses; the understanding of the causes of visible things, which soul desired, is more human than that knowledge that was designated to be the necessary knowledge. It has become evident that the necessary knowledge is for the sake of this knowledge; the knowledge that of old we used to suppose as superfluous is not, it is the necessary knowledge for rendering man substantial and making him reach his final perfection. And it has become evident that the knowledge that Aristotle investigated at the outset as a test or examination to know the truth about the above-mentioned things, has turned out to be necessary for realizing political activity,²³¹ for the sake of which man is made. And the science that comes next is investigated for two purposes: one, to render perfect the human activity²³² for the sake of which man is made, and a second, to perfect our defective natural science, since we do not possess the metaphysical science. And it has become evident that philosophy must necessarily come into being in every man in the way that is possible for him (fol. 87r 4–17).²³³

With these words ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī ends his summary of al-Fārābī’s *Falsafat Aristūṭālīs*. Then he explains that the last statement “in every man in the way that is possible for him” mentions the doctrine of the different form of assent to the truth: the absolute certainty of the man who follows

²³⁰ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 132.2–3; Mahdi (2001), 130.

²³¹ Mahdi (2001), 147, explains his translation as follows. For *al-‘aql* in line 13 read *al-fi’l* as in the unique Arabic ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Aya Sofya* 4833 and add *al-madanī* with ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī (ms. Bursa, *Hüseyn Çelebi* 823, fol. 87r 12). I am following this text, and correct *al-‘aql al-madanī* to *al-fi’l al-madanī*.

²³² Mahdi (2001), 147, reads for *al-‘aql* in line 14 *al-fi’l*. I am following this text and correct *al-‘aql* in *al-fi’l*.

²³³ Cf. Mahdi (1961), 132.4–133.3; Mahdi (2001), 130.

the demonstrative way as indicated by Aristotle in the *Kitāb al-Burhān*²³⁴ and the persuasion produced by examples and images as indicated by Aristotle in the *Kitāb al-Ḥaṭāba*²³⁵ and the *Kitāb al-Ši'r*.²³⁶ The only one way that is contrary to the truth which man is looking for is the way of sophistry.

From this point, unlike al-Fārābī, 'Abd al-Laṭīf begins to analyze the metaphysical science which has as its objects of inquiry divine and noble things (fol. 87v 4–5). 'Abd al-Laṭīf seems to mention the *Theology*. He states that Aristotle in the *Kitāb bi-uṭūlūġiyya*²³⁷ said that God created the terrestrial world for man and also created in man the intellect and dispersed it (*ġa'ala-hu mabtūtan*) in his soul so that it might be a weapon (*silāh*) which strengthens man to make him able to live in the earth (i.e. practical intellect) and to investigate the creation of the heavens and the earth and the wonders which are found in the heavens and on the earth (i.e. theoretical intellect). And he says that God is provident and takes care of qualitatively better men and inspires them as a result of the mediation of the active intellect or through the way of meditation, or through the way of the effulgence of soul or through the way of revelation (fol. 87v 5–12).²³⁸

For 'Abd al-Laṭīf, as for al-Fārābī, thus, Plato and his disciple Aristotle pursue the same purpose (*qaṣd*)²³⁹ and the same end (*ġāya*) in their

²³⁴ The *Kitāb al-Burhān* or *Book of Demonstration* corresponds to the *Posterior Analytics*. The story of this Aristotelian work in Arabic is rather complex: according to *Fihrist* the treatise was translated partially into Syriac by Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq and completely by Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (249.11–12 Flügel); Iṣḥāq's version was translated into Arabic by Abū Biṣr Mattā (249. 12 Flügel). This translation was edited and annotated many times in the tenth Aristotelian circle of Baghdad. This fact is testified by the *scolia* recorded by Ibn Suwār for all the book of the *Organon* transmitted in ms. Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France, ar. 2346. Cf. Hugonnard-Roche (1993); Hugonnard-Roche (1999); Elamrani-Jamal (1989a).

²³⁵ On the Arabic version of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* cf. Lyons (1982); Aouad (1989); Aouad-Watt (2003); Vagelpohl (2008).

²³⁶ On the Arabic version of Aristotle's *Poetics* cf. Tkatsch (1928); Hugonnard-Roche (2003).

²³⁷ In the manuscript I read *kitāb bū* followed by a cancellation under which a *r* and finally *lūṭiyya* can just be seen. This may be a bad transcription of *uṭūlūġiyya*.

²³⁸ Fenton (1986), 241–264, has demonstrated that 'Abd al-Laṭīf used the Long Version of the *Theology of Aristotle* for his paraphrase in the *Kitāb fi 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭab'ā*. I asked Prof. Fenton if it is possible also to recognize 'Abd al-Laṭīf's use of the Long Version of the *Theology* from this passage of the *Kitāb al-Naṣīhatayn*. Indeed I find the use of the two expressions *ġa'ala-hu mabtūtan* and *silāh* which do not appear in the short version of the *Theology* very strange. He answered that in view of the fact that the passage is so short it is difficult to find an exact correspondence. There is a passage where the Long Version freely uses the metaphor of the 'weapon' (*silāh*) (the passages corresponding to Castellani's Latin translation p. 106).

²³⁹ Cf. al-Fārābī, *Kitāb Tahṣil al-sa'āda*, in *Rasā'il al-Fārābī*, 47.9–10; Mahdi (2001), 50; Mallet (1999), 37–38; Martini Bonadeo (2008), 36.5–37.2; 46.5–47.16, 81–82.

philosophical speculation, that is to say, the perfection of man as man, which both identify in knowledge of the truth of things. Moreover, they describe a system so perfect in its organicity and completeness that the generations following them are left with nothing but the task of studying it in an attempt to understand their thought correctly.

It has become evident from everything we have reported that the purpose and the end of Plato and his disciple Aristotle, were the same. As far as philosophy is concerned, there remained no task for modern authors other than to understand it and to be their students, no important part of it which had not been discovered, verified, and perfected, and no argument which must be supplemented, and no room for mistake (fol. 87v 12–15).

The exceptional nature of Plato’s and Aristotle’s philosophy, says ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, has three causes: first, their philosophy is useful in motivating one to study, second, for a long time they had influence in this field: generations of students followed their teaching and criticized only some marginal points of Aristotle’s logic. But al-Fārābī has since demonstrated the correctness of Aristotle’s doctrine on the hyparctic premises (*muḡaddama muṭlaqa*, litt. absolute premises)²⁴⁰ and the mixed syllogism (*muḡtaliḡa maḡāyīs*)²⁴¹ in his great commentary on the *Prior Analytics*. Hence this philosophy is well tested (fol. 88r 1–14). The third reason for the absolute primacy of their philosophy lies in their research into the causes from the more distant to the closest to the object. This method of inquiry does not need anything else and it is impossible to confute. It is therefore a great mistake to believe that the works of the moderns are clearer, more useful, or qualitatively superior with respect to those of the ancients (fols 88r 14–88v 12).

2.3. *‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī and Avicenna*

As far as his examination of Avicenna’s philosophy is concerned, however, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī proposes a curious experiment. On folio 88v 13 we read, “The exposition of the method of Ibn Sīnā will be clarified by means of the examination of my relationship with him”. Following this statement is the biography that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf gives us of himself.

This operation would seem to be anything but casual: Avicenna himself left a biography of the first thirty years of his life dictated to his pupil and

²⁴⁰ Cf. Lameer (1994), 55–63; Martini Bonadeo (2008), 129–132.

²⁴¹ I.e. the syllogism where one of the premises is modal. On the question of al-Fārābī’s attribution to Aristotle of a book on hypothetical syllogisms cf. Martini Bonadeo (2008), 118–120.

secretary Abū ‘Ubayd al-Ġūzġānī.²⁴² ‘Abd al-Laṭīf very probably knew this work because in some parts of his own autobiography he seems to parody it. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf recounts:

I was born in Baghdad and there I was educated in the reading of the Koran and *ḥadīṭ*; I then devoted myself to the knowledge of the Arabic language, I learnt by heart many books on the subject while I was still at school.²⁴³ I then frequented the *madrasa* and devoted myself to controversy (*ḥilāf*), dialectic (*ġadal*), and a current of theologico-juridical studies (*maḏhab*).²⁴⁴ In the meantime, I continue to devote myself to the Arabic language, the Koranic sciences, and my zeal in this was greater than in the rest. Thus my memory was strengthened and I concentrated all my attention on those disciplines to start to learn by heart one quire a day and even more than one. The greatest amount my memory reached of Abū ‘Alī [al-Fārisī’s] *Kitāb al-īdāh*²⁴⁵ was the quantity of eighteen folios a day. I then devoted myself to the fundamental texts, among which the book by Ibn Durustawayh,²⁴⁶ after it the commentary on the book by al-Ġarmī²⁴⁷ made up of many volumes, then al-Mubarrad’s *al-Muḡtaḏab*²⁴⁸ on which I spent a long period of time, then Ibn al-Sarrāġ’s *Uṣūl*²⁴⁹ and the *Kitāb Sibawayh*.²⁵⁰ I copied his commentary in my handwriting so that a group of those under whose guidance I had studied could confirm my ability and excellence in the knowledge of the Arabic language.²⁵¹

My father – God have mercy on him – dealt with the sciences in conformity with Islamic law (*šarī‘a*): a current of theologico-juridical studies (*maḏhab*),²⁵² and controversy (*ḥilāf*) in the *ta’līq* of As‘ad al-Mayhanī;²⁵³ and

²⁴² Cf. above chapter I, note 391.

²⁴³ The term translated as school is *maktab*, the institution which imparted elementary education. This type of school took pupils at the age of around seven to ten; in it they studied calligraphy, read the Koran, and memorized texts of poetry and Muslim creed (*‘itiqād*): cf. Makdisi (1981), 19.

²⁴⁴ For the translation of the term *maḏhab* cf. above note 19.

²⁴⁵ Cf. above notes 41 and 42.

²⁴⁶ Cf. above note 44.

²⁴⁷ This is a commentary on the treatise by Abū ‘Umar Šālih ibn Iṣḥāq al-Ġarmī (d. 839) entitled *al-Muḡtaṣar fi l-naḥw*, also called *Muḡtaṣar naḥw al-muta‘allimīn* (*Compendium of the Grammar of the Masters*), considered to be an authoritative text of the school of Baṣra; cf. al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt ‘alā anbāh al-nuḥāt*, II. 80–83.2 Ibrāhīm; cf. Sezgin (1984), IX. 72–73.

²⁴⁸ Cf. above note 43.

²⁴⁹ Cf. above note 51.

²⁵⁰ Cf. above note 47.

²⁵¹ Avicenna said of himself, “When I reached the age of ten years I had full knowledge of the Koran and of a great amount of literature such as to inspire great admiration”. Cf. Gutas (1988), 23.2.

²⁵² Cf. above note 19.

²⁵³ This is As‘ad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Mayhanī (d. 1133), an Iranian *faqīh* who taught first in Marw and Hamaḏān; was then professor at the *Nizāmīyya madrasa* in Baghdad and left a school textbook (*ta’līq*) on the *šāfi‘i* law and problems regarding controversies (*ḥilāf*); cf. Makdisi (1981), 111–128.

he was famous at that time and reached a high level in his knowledge of *ḥadīth* and the disciplines of the Koran. As for medicine, astrology (*nuḡūm*), and philosophy (*ḥikma*), he was introduced²⁵⁴ to them without lacking of them. He was among the great companions of our Ḍiyā al-Dīn, the master Ibn al-Nağīb.²⁵⁵ He undertook around forty pilgrimates. When I was little, he made me listen to all the great masters of Baghdad, and, after his death, I already read and listened to many treatises on the Arabic language and the two sciences of *ḥadīth* and the Koran.

It happened that I fell ill without being able to understand why at that time; a professor of the Arabic language, who was a blind man, presented me with a part of the treatise *al-Ḥāwī fī l-ṭibb* by al-Rāzī²⁵⁶ which I read for him. I found in this treatise a description of my illness and a description of the therapy which I had to follow. I devoted myself to curing it by mean of al-Rāzī's treatise and I recovered completely.

I loved medicine and I went in search of Ibn Hibat-Allāh ibn al-Tilmīd.²⁵⁷ He was around eighty, and I stayed in his company and studied with him for about a year; he died after he converted to Islam – God have mercy on him. And I found no one besides him who could be fully entitled to be called a physician.

I then began to read the *Qānūn* of Ibn Sīnā;²⁵⁸ I also found among my father's books in his handwriting a poem of logic in the *rağaz* meter by Ibn Sīnā²⁵⁹ and its commentary in prose; I read it many times and I learnt a part of it by heart since it interested me very much.

I then came across the *Miʿyār al-ʿilm* by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġazālī,²⁶⁰ and I learnt it by heart and found in it things which corresponded to grammar

²⁵⁴ *Mutaṭarrifan*. Cf. De Sacy (1810), 479; Gutas (2011), 12.

²⁵⁵ Cf. above note 25.

²⁵⁶ Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā' al-Rāzī, *al-Ḥāwī fī l-ṭibb*, Ḥaydarābād 1955–70. The treatise *al-Ḥāwī fī l-ṭibb* by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā' al-Rāzī (d. 925 c.) is without doubt the work that best describes the level of medical knowledge reached in the Islamic world. This treatise in 25 volumes collects together the observations of al-Rāzī, doctor of proven clinical experience for having directed the hospitals of Rayy and Baghdad. It also includes other clinical observations selected by al-Rāzī from the limitless medical literature he knew. All this material, taken therefore from a great variety of sources, originally functioned as preparatory material for other works on a more specific subject. It was a posthumous compilation by al-Rāzī's pupils. It is organized according to a precise criterion of the anatomical description of the human body from the head to the tip of the feet: each observation ends with the personal opinion of the author, diverging from the other learned opinions quoted. The treatise *al-Ḥāwī fī l-ṭibb* had great success: it was translated into Latin in 1279 for king Charles of Anjou by the Jewish doctor Farağ ibn Sālīm, known as Farraguth, under the title *Continens* and was printed for the first time in Brescia in 1486. This first printed edition was followed by others. Cf. Sezgin (1970), III. 274–294 and in particular 278–281; Ullmann (1970), 128–131 and in particular 130–131.

²⁵⁷ Cf. above note 57.

²⁵⁸ Cf. above note 192.

²⁵⁹ This is the composition in verse *Poem on Logic* (*Urğūza fī l-mantiq*). Ibn Sīnā, *Urğūza fī l-mantiq*, in Jahier–Noureddine (1960).

²⁶⁰ Cf. above note 67. 'Abd al-Latīf observes that the logic of al-Ġazālī contained in the *Miʿyār al-ʿilm* deals with many problems that also recur in grammar, yet its method is

(*naḥw*) such as the discourse on the noun, the verb, and the particle, and their definitions and parts, and others, such as premises, propositions, affirmation, negation, *ʿudūl*,²⁶¹ condition, necessity, how much, how, when, and similar things to this. By coming across this treatise, I learnt a higher science than the science of grammar, and I then devoted myself to the *Maqāṣid* by al-Ġazālī.²⁶² I copied it in my handwriting and I learnt it by heart. Then I carefully studied the *Miḥakk al-naẓar* and the *Mizān al-naẓar* also by al-Ġazālī²⁶³ and I read these two works in the writing of Ibn al-Ḥaššāb al-Naḥwī (the Grammarian).²⁶⁴ It occurred to me that the grammarian can become more specialized and stronger in this science only by means of logic through which he can surpass other grammarians, and I lingered on this for a certain time.²⁶⁵

I then heard word of the books of Ibn Sīnā and I transcribed the treatise *al-Nağāt*²⁶⁶ and learnt it by heart, and al-Ġazālī's books seemed to me a superficial imitation and their contents trivial in comparison with *al-Nağāt*.

superior. Al-Ġazālī had in fact written this textbook of logic, based on Avicenna's teaching, for the Sunni theologians and jurists who all came from grammatical studies and hence had difficulties with strictly philosophical texts of logic because of the very technical language in which they were written.

²⁶¹ Gutas (2011), 15: "*ʿUdūl* is when a proposition, whether affirmative or negative, has a negated predicate term (i.e. A is not B/ A is not not B), in which case the proposition (and also the term itself?) is called *maʿdūla*". Cf. Thom (2008), 193–209. The term *ʿudūl* is problematic. It has been variously translated as 'equivalence' by Goichon (1938), 212, as 'metathesis' by Zimmermann (1981), lxiii.

²⁶² Cf. above note 67.

²⁶³ Ibidem.

²⁶⁴ Cf. above note 52.

²⁶⁵ Cf. Gutas (2011), 15–16, states that this passage shed light on the intellectual background in which ʿAbd al-Laṭīf grew up – that of an upper class scholar belonging to the *Nizāmiyya* circles – and on the status of philosophy in ʿAbd al-Laṭīf's milieu – that of Baghdad from the beginning of the twelfth century. Gutas writes, "Both scholars of language and scholars of religion studied logic seriously. And what they studied was the logic of Aristotle's *Categories*, *De Interpretatione* and the *Analytics*, as developed and recast by Avicenna and copied from him by al-Ghazālī (...). It is also clear that the presence of al-Ghazālī in the Baghdad *Nizāmiyya* circles half a century after his death was strong. Once interested in logic through Avicenna's *Urjūza*, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf read practically all of al-Ghazālī's works on logic, plus the *Maqāṣid*. And here, on the subject of how al-Ghazālī's philosophical works were received in these circles, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf's testimony throws an interesting light. We all know that the *Miʿyār* is the logic of the *Tahāfut*, the *Miḥakk* the theoretical logic of *Maqāṣid*, and the *Mizān* the practical logic of the *Maqāṣid* (...). It is interesting both that ʿAbd al-Laṭīf does not say anything about having read the *Tahāfut* since he knew the *Miʿyār* (though of course he did, as I will discuss in the next section), and that he went ahead to seek philosophical study in spite of the strong presence of al-Ghazālī in his studies. This indicates that the traditional orientalist (and apparently also modern oriental) picture of al-Ghazālī's status at the time is inaccurate. Al-Ghazālī was not seen as destroying philosophy or arguing against it as a discipline, and he certainly did not have a chilling effect on its study (...). Furthermore, by mentioning in this passage only these expository philosophical works of al-Ghazālī and none of his eristic or dialectical ones like the *Tahāfut*, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf is pointing to the perception of al-Ghazālī in the *Nizāmiyya* circles as a philosopher pure and simple, at least as far as these works were concerned".

²⁶⁶ Cf. above 122.

Then I began the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*,²⁶⁷ transcribed it, sought out all its books (the long ones and the short ones), came into possession of them and fervently devoted myself to them. I read a part of them before a group with whose failings I found myself in difficulty and I confirmed my intention of finding a man complete and capable in this science who could sort out the solution to the problem for me.

I then devoted myself to Arabic and Indian mathematics and reached a good level in both. I wrote a treatise of Indian <mathematics>²⁶⁸ and an essay on the science of the magic square (*wafq*).²⁶⁹ I then turned to the *Kitāb al-Uṣūl*,²⁷⁰ that is to say, the book of Euclid and I analyzed it for a brief period whose duration, if it were not for fear of being reproached, I would give, and, in any case, it was a period of time shorter than that in which Ibn Sīnā analyzed the same book.²⁷¹

I then left Baghdad in the hope of finding someone with whom to study and I came to Mosul; I had already heard of a learned man there, but I found that he had not attained to the same simple level that I already had and, moreover, he did not resolve what constituted a difficulty for me.²⁷² I then heard [the previous master] speak of a man who had already distinguished himself in southern Turkey (*Diyār Bakr*), known Šihāb al-Suhrawardī.²⁷³

²⁶⁷ Cf. above chapter I, note 402.

²⁶⁸ It is interesting to note first of all that while in the biography given by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a 'Abd al-Laṭīf seems to have devoted his last period of stay in Baghdad to the study of alchemy and does not mention his mathematical studies (cf. above 122), in this biography he speaks precisely of these latter. In his biography Avicenna also says he had studied Indian mathematics: cf. Gutas (1988), 24.5). But 'Abd al-Laṭīf even states that he has written an original treatise on the subject. There is no trace of this treatise in Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, 'Abbās, while in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II. 211.15 Müller, we find quoted a *Book of That Which is Evident in Indian Mathematics (Kitāb al-ǧalīy fī l-ḥisāb al-hindī)*.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II. 211.14 Müller; Endress (1987), 72 and note 59.

²⁷⁰ On Euclid's *Elements*, in Arabic *Kitāb al-Uṣūl* or *Uṣūl al-handasa*, see Sezgin (1974), V. 83–115.

²⁷¹ In his autobiography Avicenna narrates that he read with his master Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Nātili the introductory definitions and the postulates up to the sixth proposition of the first book of Euclid's *Elements*, then that he undertook the study and the solution to the problems proposed by the treatise alone: cf. Gohlman (1974), 22–7; Gutas (1988), 26.7–9. 'Abd al-Laṭīf polemically highlights the fact that he studied Euclid's treatise in decidedly less time than that taken by Avicenna. Gutas (2011), 14, states that Avicenna in his autobiography does not specify, "the length of time it took him to study Euclid's book, only that it was before his 16th birthday. But Avicenna does mention how long it took him to study other subjects in philosophy, and 'Abd al-Laṭīf either confused the time of study of Euclid with that of the other subjects or, since the *Elements* is the only book which Avicenna and 'Abd al-Laṭīf mention in common as having studied in their teens, this was the only book with regard to whose study he could compare himself to Avicenna favourably. In any case, the point is that 'Abd al-Laṭīf's autobiography is consciously written with Avicenna's in the background and it should so be read.

²⁷² This could be the Kamāl ibn Yūnus that 'Abd al-Laṭīf met in Mosul: cf. above 123 and note 74.

²⁷³ Cf. above 123–125.

I asked about him and found that the people exaggerated in praising him and exalting him since they considered him first among all. I said to myself that he was exactly the one whom I had gone in search of and I intended to follow my intention of going to him. The aid of God came to me and I looked for some of his works. His book known as *al-Lamḥa*,²⁷⁴ found its way into my hands and I discovered that al-Suhrawardī poorly copied Ibn Sīnā's discourse taken from the treatise *al-Tanbīhāt wa-l-iṣārāt*,²⁷⁵ placing between its parts the speech of one who speaks with incorrect grammar and in an aphasic way. In my opinion what was contained in my discourse, whose truth I had not enough confidence to show to someone, was in any case far better than this and I changed my opinion. I thanked God – praise be to Him – that He had increased my honour.

Then I went to Damascus where I did not find anyone.

I subsequently moved to Egypt where I found two men devoted to the books of the Ancients. One of them, named Mūsā, was a Jew of Magreb origin.²⁷⁶ He had great knowledge and there was profundity in him even though he was submerged and busy in worldly affairs: the building of his house, frequenting men in command and of prominence.²⁷⁷

As for the other he was known as Abū l-Qāsim:²⁷⁸ he lived in a sober and poor way and was mad about philosophy. He presented himself to make my acquaintance. We were inseparable and free <discussions> began to take place between us. Each of us was lacking in what his companion had: I was stronger than him in dialectic and eloquence and better in memory and boldness, but Abū l-Qāsim²⁷⁹ was stronger in trusting what he had than

²⁷⁴ Cf. above note 78.

²⁷⁵ Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Iṣārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* or *Treatise of Signs and Warnings*, from which 'Abd al-Laṭīf maintains that al-Suhrawardī copied the *Kitāb al-Lamaḥāt*, deals with knowledge of an intuitive type that is produced by immediate apprehensions. The treatise has been edited by Dunyā (1957–60), (1968–70). Cf. Janssens (1991), 18–20; Janssens (1999), 10–12.

²⁷⁶ This is clearly Ibn Maymūn, that is to say Moses Maimonides, cf. above 129–131.

²⁷⁷ It seems interesting to note that 'Abd al-Laṭīf's observation here, that, even though he was an extremely learned man, Maimonides had little time to devote to study and teaching since he was too busy in worldly affairs, is corroborated by the words of Maimonides himself. In a letter to his friend and translator of some of his works from Arabic into Hebrew, Samuel ibn Tibbon, Maimonides writes, "Being the Sultan's personal physician is very demanding for me. I see him every day early in the morning. When he, or one of his sons, or one of his concubines becomes ill I am like a prisoner; I spend almost all day at court. It is not often that I also have to look after some courtesans". The letter goes on to say that even when Maimonides manages to go home at midday the situation is no better: "I find awaiting me a noisy crowd of pagans and Jews, poor people and nobles, judges and merchants, friends and enemies. I greet everyone, I wash my hands and I ask them respectfully to give me time to take some refreshment. Then I go upstairs to visit them and prescribe them the medicines that I believe to be appropriate, and I work until late, sometimes tiring myself so much that I can hardly speak" (the passage from this letter is quoted in Ferre (1991) 16.

²⁷⁸ Cf. above 131–132.

²⁷⁹ In the manuscript the reading is *Abū l-Qasam*.

I was in trusting what I had. Therefore he appeared to break up in my hands, but in reality I was weak and I persuaded him, but his speech and his doubts remained in my heart like something which gnaws away inside. He began to present me with the books [of the Ancients] and led me to them little by little, after having inspired in me a passion for them. On my part I copied everything I managed to and I bought all I could. Abū l-Qāsim called my attention to their texts and the jewels of their contents. Every time I listen and I considered their content, [Abū l-Qāsim] gave me the advantage so that the desire and the intention awoke in me, and I turned all propensities to the study of the works [of the Ancients].

I began to go over again what I had learnt from the discourse of Ibn Sīnā and I compared it with what I found in the books [of the Ancients], and I became aware of his inferiority, his stupidity, and his inability to express himself and his insufficient content. Despite all this my soul did not permit the explicit admission of his failings and the rejection of his philosophy because of the profound nature of my familiarity with Ibn Sīnā and because of the strength of my conviction in him. But the more I grew in the knowledge of the discourse of the Ancients, the more my lack of interest in and my aversion to Ibn Sīnā's discourse grew. Every day his inferiority became clearer to me, and I began to consider what at first seemed nearly impossible – that someone like Ibn Sīnā was wrong and that someone like me had not realized it, even though I had devoted myself to him for more than twenty years, until the moment in which I clarified and explained his discourse. I then began to regret the days I had wasted in vain devoting myself to his discourse – these were the days of the flower of my youth, my greatest vigour, my freedom from work, the lack of worries and the malaise of youth.²⁸⁰ It is said that God – may He be sanctified and exalted – can at times inform people by a revelation that He had offered to them at some time previously.

For this reason the perfect master deserves your complete gratitude and high praise; the most elementary advantage that the perfect master brings is to indicate the appropriate book and the correct road.²⁸¹ When the master tells you to devote yourself to this book and instead to leave that one, he has already given you an important advantage and has called your attention to something useful so as to deserve your gratitude and the title of supreme master. It is your duty to be his pupil and to make yourself his disciple; similarly, if he does not make you notice a particular subject of this text, by the mere fact of advising you of its existence, this is enough for him to distinguish

²⁸⁰ Cf. above 131; In describing his progressive rejection of Avicenna's philosophy and his concomitant approach towards the ancient Peripatetic tradition, ‘Abd al-Lāṭif clearly expresses his discomfort at not having realized the errors inherent in Avicenna's thought and at having devoted himself to it for over twenty years. This element is another source of ‘Abd al-Lāṭif's strong aversion to Avicenna which he expresses without mincing his words in the pages that follow, in which ‘Abd al-Lāṭif presents his criticisms of Avicenna's philosophy.

²⁸¹ In my copy of Bursa manuscript I can not read some words in the left margin note of fol. 90v.

himself as a master and deserve the title, and for you to be obliged to him. If, finally, you reach a more complete understanding of the text than he does, do not cease to be one of his followers and his pupils. Just as in the case of a son, even when it happens that the son exceeds his father in perfection, this does not change the fact that he is his father's son nor does it annul any of the essential rights of the father with respect to the son, including the son's respect and his welcome²⁸² (fols 88v 13–91r 8).

At this point 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī makes a series of criticisms on Avicenna's philosophy, in particular, his logic. In the first place, 'Abd al-Laṭīf explains that Avicenna did not manage to present an exhaustive philosophical system in which every field of philosophical research could receive adequate treatment. Against the current opinion whereby in each of his works – even in the minor ones such as the *Kitāb al-hidāya* (*Book of Orientation*)²⁸³ – Avicenna presented a philosophical system capable of explaining every area of reality, 'Abd al-Laṭīf criticizes Avicenna's lack of reflection on the practical field. Even in his most famous *summa*, the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, Avicenna neglected the contents of Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Ethics*, and his *Politics*. 'Abd al-Laṭīf explains this omission as a total lack of familiarity by Avicenna not only with practical philosophy, but also with philosophy in general.

In the second place, 'Abd al-Laṭīf makes an observation of an epistemological nature against Avicenna: he seems to have distorted or not to have had any knowledge of the fundamental Aristotelian epistemological criterion according to which research must begin with that which is more easily knowable to us (cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* A 1, 184 a 16–21; *Eth. Nic.* I 4, 1095 b 3–4). This is why, for example, in 'Abd al-Laṭīf's opinion, Avicenna mistakenly placed zoology after his treatment of the soul.

After this I found the books of Ibn Sīnā to be insufficient. They did not treat the parts of philosophy (*ḥikma*) exhaustively. Those who do not know this author will think that all his books, the longest ones as well as the shortest ones, are exhaustive with regards to this problem, and some maintain that even his book entitled *al-Hidāya*, despite its meagreness, is exhaustive in this regard. When I studied Ibn Sīnā's books in detail, however, I discovered that the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, which is the biggest of his known books, did not present all the parts of philosophy. Indeed, it did not deal with that which is contained in the book of the *Republic*, in that of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in that of the *Politics*. In general it did not consider practical philosophy, and it clearly emerged from his discourses and from his book that he had no connection with practical philosophy. You, on the other hand, already know

²⁸² Cf. above 140.

²⁸³ Ed. 'Abduh (1974).

the excellence and the highness of this part of philosophy from my summary of the philosophy of Plato and of Aristotle, which I have dedicated to you.²⁸⁴

Furthermore, in presenting the parts of philosophy, Ibn Sīnā placed before that which should have been placed afterwards and placed afterwards that which should have been placed before, either because of ignorance or misunderstanding or for some other reason. For example, he placed the *Kitāb al-Nafs* (*De Anima*) before the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (*Book of Animals*) believing that the former was more elevated. He did not know in fact that the Aristotelians²⁸⁵ placed first that which is more easily knowable and later what is more difficult to understand.

Moreover, he placed at the beginning of many of his works some well written pronouncements whose exact position is at the beginning of the *Kitāb al-burhān*:²⁸⁶ he says that every form of knowledge and learning is nothing if not a concept or judgement. In it, he says that the concept is the first science and it is acquired due to the definition or due to what is similar to it, and that judgement is acquired by means of the syllogism or due to what is similar to it, until the end of the chapter of what is contained in the introduction to the *Kitāb al-Nağāt*²⁸⁷ and also in the book *Kitāb al-Awsaṭ*,²⁸⁸ etc. (fols 91r 8–91v 6).

This observation seems to me to be particularly interesting. The discourse on every form of knowledge and learning, taken from the *Kitāb al-Burhān*, which, according to ‘Abd al-Latīf, Avicenna placed before many of his works is, in all probability, the *incipit* of the *Posterior Analytics*, lines 71a 1–3. In it, Aristotle sets out his concept of science: it is not an immediate knowledge or an intuition, but a mediation, or an argumentation, that is to say, a knowledge that derives from previous knowledge. ‘Abd al-Latīf specifies, moreover, that this discourse by Avicenna does not only concern the knowledge expressed by the concept (*taṣawwūr*), but also that expressed in judgment (*taṣdīq*).²⁸⁹ In fact, a discourse of this kind, which ‘Abd al-Latīf says he has read in the introduction to the *Kitāb al-Nağāt* and

²⁸⁴ ‘Abd al-Latīf is clearly referring to the summary he had previously presented of al-Fārābī’s *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle* in which, in line with his profound conviction that theoretical philosophy is a *prolegomenon* to action, al-Fārābī devoted much space to his treatment of the ethical and political doctrine of the two Greek philosophers (cf. above 157–173). ‘Abd al-Latīf’s interlocutor might be fictive or real: for example, one of his pupils of philosophy which, as we have seen, he taught at the *al-Azhar* mosque in Cairo (cf. above 134), and probably at the *al-Aqsā* mosque in Jerusalem (cf. above 136), the *al-‘Azīziyya* madrasa in Damascus (cf. above 136), and privately in Aleppo (cf. above 136).

²⁸⁵ Cf. 169.

²⁸⁶ Cf. above note 234.

²⁸⁷ Cf. above 122.

²⁸⁸ This may be Avicenna’s compendium of the *Organon* known as the *Middle Compendium of Logic* (*al-Muḥtaṣar al-awsaṭ fi l-manṭiq*) or *Awsaṭ al-Ġurḡānī fi l-manṭiq*; cf. Gutas (1993), 36.

²⁸⁹ On the terms *taṣawwūr* and *taṣdīq* cf. Goichon (1938), 179–180, 184–185.

in the *Kitāb al-Awsaṭ*, is found both in the first pages of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, and in the introduction to his *Dānesh-Nāmeḥ*, the important encyclopaedic treatise written in Persian. In the first section of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, which, as is known, considers logic beginning with the *Isagoge* (*al-Madḥal*), Avicenna devotes the third chapter to the "usefulness of logic".²⁹⁰ In it Avicenna states that an object can be known in two ways: either according to the concept or according to judgement. The object is known according to the concept when there corresponds a name to the object, we pronounce it, and its meaning is visualized in the mind. For example, we say 'man' and we immediately understand its meaning. The object is known according to judgement, on the other hand, when, for example, we say: "Every white is an accident". Every judgement can carry with it truth or falsehood. Nevertheless, both the acquisition of the concept and that of judgement take place because of something which is already known previously: that is to say, the mind moves from knowledge of a thing already known to know that which is not yet known. In the introduction to his *Dānesh-Nāmeḥ* the discourse is even clearer:

Knowledge is of two types. One is the concept (which is called in Arabic *taṣawwūr*); for example, if one says "man, fairy, angel" (and all that resembles them), you understand and intend that which is intended in this way. The other is the judgement: for example, you judge that the fairy exists or that "man is subject to the order" (and all that resembles this) – and this in Arabic is called *taṣdīq*. These two types of knowledge involve another two. One is the concept or the judgement that can be known from thought and of which it has no other means of being understood save by means of searching for the path of reason; for example, to understand the quiddity of the soul and come to this conception, and, for example, to adhere to the immortality of the soul. The other type is that which we do not understand and to which we do not adhere either because of thought or because of the investigation by reason, but which we understand: 1) due to the immediate intuition of reason: for example, in the case of two things equal to a third (that is in the case in which each of the two is equal to this third one), the first two are equal to each other; 2) or on account of the senses; for example, the sun is luminous; 3) or on account of concepts or judgements which we have received from great men, wise men, prophets, or *imāms*; 4) or, again, something on which all men agree and on which our education has been based; for example, we say: "lying is bad; you must not commit injustice"; 5) or there are concepts and judgements which we know by other means which will be mentioned later. For everything whose concept and judgement must be obtained by thought, we must first know something else on account of

²⁹⁰ Cf. Ibn Sinā, *Al-Šifā'*. *Al-Manṭiq*. 1- *Al-Madḥal*, 16–20 El-Khodeiri–El-Ehwani –Anawati.

which we will come to know that which is not yet known. For example, as far as the concept is concerned, if we do not know what a man is, and if someone explains it to us by saying “man is a rational animal”, we must first know what animal and rational mean and we must have understood the sentence. Then that which we do not know regarding the meaning of man we will know. For example, as far as assent and judgement are concerned, if we do not know that the universe is created and if someone demonstrates it to us and says, “The universe is provided with form, and all that which is provided with form is created”, we must adhere to this statement and recognize that the world is provided with form; and we must also adhere to and recognize that all that which is provided with form is created. Then that which we do not know regarding the state of the creation of the universe, we will know. Hence, all that which we do not know and wish to know, we will know because of the things which we have previously known. All that which is not known will be known by means of that which is already known. However, it is not any known thing which leads us to the knowledge of that which is not known. In fact, for every thing not known there is a known thing which agrees with it and due to which it alone can be known; there is, furthermore, a way in which it is necessary to proceed from that which is known to that which is not known in order for it to be known. Logic is the science by means of which we learn the condition of the knowledge of that which is not known from that which is known; it makes us know what is real knowledge, what is close to truth, and what is error (...).²⁹¹

Next, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf points out that Avicenna has produced numerous works, which have been copied from one another, as in the case of the *Kitāb al-Šifā’* and the *Kitāb al-Nağāt*.

Moving on, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf concentrates on Avicenna’s logic, which is full, in his opinion, of inconsistencies. He observes that Avicenna decided to introduce all his treatises with the discourse presented by Aristotle at the beginning of the *Posterior Analytics* I. 1, 71a 1–3 on every form of knowledge. But this, according to our author, is all that Avicenna knows of the *Posterior Analytics*. In fact, he has not dealt with what constitutes the end of logic, that is to say, the five logical arts which are the object of the *Posterior Analytics*, the *Topics*, the *Sophistical Refutations*, the *Rhetoric*, and the *Poetics*, and has dwelt on an analysis of the contents of the *Isagoge*, the *Categories*, the *De Interpretatione* and the *Prior Analytics* which,

²⁹¹ Achena – Massé (1986²), 65–67. Moreover, the fact that the model of science proposed in the *Posterior Analytics* was a crucial theme in Avicenna’s thought, as ‘Abd al-Laṭīf observes, receives further proof from the observation made by Anawati (1974), 242, who mentions in paragraph number 31 a work on demonstration (*‘ilm al-burhān*) preserved in the ms. İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, *Ahmet III*, 3447*64 whose *incipit* is the following: “Où l’on montre qu’apprendre ou enseigner, suppose une connaissance antécédente”. For Anawati this is “un extrait d’un ensemble non identifié”.

according to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, constitute a preparatory introduction to true logic. Even the *Kitāb al-Šifā’*, which deals with logic at greater length, presents a confused discourse.

I have compared word for word the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Nağāt* with that of the *Šifā’*: it is the same except for the fact that in the *Kitāb al-Šifā’* one more chapter has been placed between the chapters of the *Kitāb al-Nağāt*. Moreover, its books mostly take up and copy one another.

In none of his books does he allude to the five logical arts which are described in the *Posterior Analytics*, the *Topics*, the *Sophistical Refutations*, the *Rhetoric*, and the *Poetics*, even though these arts are the aim of logic and are indeed logic, while that which precedes them is nothing but the propaedeutic introduction to them and the path which leads to them and aims at them. Ibn Sīnā, however, merely speaks of the syllogism (or of the *Prior Analytics*?) and at times dresses up a poor discourse and empty allusions with some pronouncements taken from the *Posterior Analytics* and other works. He mentions logic only briefly in the *Kitāb al-Šifā’*: his discourse in this treatise is a discourse of little importance, uncertain and confused in so far as there is in it neither force nor potency, competence, breadth, corrections or rectifications as occurs in the *Isagoge*, the *Categories (Maqūlāt)*, *De Interpretatione (Ibāra)* and the *Prior Analytics (Qiyās)*. And his discourse on that which follows the *Prior Analytics* is closer to Aristotle’s copy than to a commentary (?).²⁹² If Ibn Sīnā had simply copied Aristotle to the letter, it would have been better for him and less risky. Ibn Sīnā, in fact, names these first four parts of logic [...], and then he becomes weaker in that which follows when he has nearly reached the five arts which are the objective and aim. He, who stops before reaching them, in truth, stops before the end. The frequent errors and the inadequacy of Aristotle and his followers are astonishing in the four parts of logic which are the introductions and premises, while they avoid these errors in the remaining five arts which are the foundations and the ends. What is this insolence towards these foundations in the former with respect to the confidence in them in the latter? What is this transgression towards these foundations in that which is easy with respect to the dependence on them in that which is difficult? It is amazing how Aristotle never erred, neither in the *Posterior Analytics* despite their obscurity and the subtlety of their premises, in the art of dialectic described in the *Topics*, despite the multiplicity of its articulations, nor either in the *Rhetoric* despite the ramifications and partitions of its currents. Aristotle, in fact, applies himself in the latter to the study of nations’ life styles, their customs, and their characters. It astonishes that in the category of ἔχελυ (*al-milk*) Ibn Sīnā should say that he has not clarified it despite the ease of this task, while the rules of dialectic and rhetoric are clarified. Again it is unbelievable that Ibn Sīnā should believe that the movement of the sky falls into the category of κείσθαι (*al-waḍ’*) even though he himself has written a book on *De Caelo et*

²⁹² I am not sure of my reading of the left margin of fol. 91 v.

mundo and on the *Physics*. But the thing that is most amazing about him is that he maintains in the *Isagoge* (*Isāġūġī*) that he is capable of defining one of two relative terms without turning to the other, and he defines the genus separately and the species separately and the father separately and the son separately – with a common name in the definition but different species regarding the corruption, yet then he says in the definition of father that he is a living thing which creates from his sperm another living thing similar to him, moving then from a single relation and falling into four relations in so far as he maintains that the definition is none other than a definition which is founded on the definition (fols 91v 6–92v 1).

In this criticism of Avicenna the argument is clear: he has not treated the five logical arts which are the object of the *Posterior Analytics*, the *Topics*, the *Sophistical Refutations*, the *Rhetoric*, and the *Poetics* and has dwelt on an analysis of the contents of the *Isagoge*, the *Categories*, the *De Interpretatione* and the *Prior Analytics*. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī provides examples which strengthen his strong criticism. 1. In the first place it is surprising him that Avicenna has not clarified the category of ἔχειν.²⁹³ But, in fact, in the *al-Maqūlāt* section of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, Avicenna devotes few words to his explanation of the meaning and the value of this category. He maintains that it is not a clear category and recognises that he has not managed to understand it because he does not see how it can contain species.²⁹⁴ Moreover, 'Abd al-Laṭīf is amazed by the fact that Avicenna places the movement of the sky in the category of κείσθαι, even though he himself has written a book on the *De Caelo et mundo* and on the *Physics*. The category of κείσθαι is explained by Avicenna both in the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* and the *Kitāb al-Naġāt* as the manner of being of the body in as far as the fact that its parts constitute, one with another, a relation of inclination and parallelism in relation to the directions and the parts of the place, if the body is in a place, such as, for example standing up and sitting down.²⁹⁵ 'Abd al-Laṭīf's third criticism is of Avicenna's claim that he can define one of two relative terms without recourse to the other. 'Abd al-Laṭīf stresses

²⁹³ Afnan (1964), 89–90, synoptically presenting the Arabic translation of Aristotle's ten categories in the various translators, al-Kindī, the Brethren of Purity and in the Arabic and Persian Avicenna, observes that in the *Kitāb al-Naġāt* Avicenna translates ἔχειν as *al-milk*, while in the section of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* devoted to logic and in particular in the second part entitled *al-Maqūlāt* we find it translated in the same way as that used by the first Arabic translator of the *Categories*, Ibn al-Muqaffā, as *al-ġida* (Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Šifā'*. *Al-Mantiq*. 2- *Al-Maqūlāt*, 235.7 Anawati–El-Khodeiri–El-Ehwani–Zayed). On the two equivalent terms *milk* and *ġida* cf. Goichon (1938), 381, 420.

²⁹⁴ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Šifā'*. *Al-Mantiq*. 2 – *Al-Maqūlāt*, 235.7–16. 2 Anawati–El-Khodeiri–El-Ehwani–Zayed.

²⁹⁵ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Šifā'*. *Al-Mantiq*. 2 – *Al-Maqūlāt*, 233.8–235.6 Anawati–El-Khodeiri–El-Ehwani–Zayed.

that in the *Isagoge* Avicenna defines genus separately and species separately and father separately and son separately. Then in his definition of father as a “living thing which creates from his sperm another living thing similar to him” Avicenna finds himself obliged to seek recourse to four distinct relations.²⁹⁶

‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī then proceeds to criticise Avicenna’s theory of the syllogism. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf states that Avicenna has added a fourth figure of the syllogism without following it by any explanation, probably because it was not clear to him or because he did not have a work on the subject at hand to plagiarize. From ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s words we can get some indication of the nature of this fourth syllogistic figure: it is an unusual figure which makes the transition from that which is particular to that which is general.²⁹⁷ Avicenna, on the other hand, has concentrated on hypothetical syllogisms. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf maintains that these do not exist as he has demonstrated in many of his books: when compared with the discourse of the peripatetic masters, hypothetical syllogisms are as inconsistent as dust.²⁹⁸ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf observes that even Avicenna’s follower, Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, seems to be aware of the falseness of hypothetical syllogisms in some of his treatises (fols 92v 1–93r 14).

Finally, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf lists a series of further criticisms of Avicenna without, however, going into each of them in detail. Avicenna has enlarged the book of the *Poetics* with an amount of material which actually derives from the *Rhetoric*.

Since Avicenna’s *Kitāb al-Šifā’*, despite its numerous errors, has become the philosophical encyclopaedia of reference among ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s contemporaries, he believes that Avicenna is the indirect cause of the vast spread of philosophical errors, such as the confusing, for example, the object proper to the *Physics*, nature, with that of the *Metaphysics* (fols 93r 15–93v 3).

‘Abd al-Laṭīf criticizes the *Kitāb al-Qānūn*’s definition of pulsation,²⁹⁹ comparing it with the one given by Ḥunayn in his *Kitāb al-Masā’il*³⁰⁰ (93v 4–94r 6).

²⁹⁶ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Šifā’*. *Al-Manṭiq*. 1 – *Al-Madḥal*, 51–52 El-Khodeiri–El-Ehwani–Anawati.

²⁹⁷ If I interpret this correctly it is confirmed by the example of the fourth figure adopted by Trendelenburg (1852), 99: Σωκράτες ἄνθρωπος, πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ζῶον, Σωκράτες ἄρα ζῶον.

²⁹⁸ Perhaps in the fourth part of his *Kitāb al-Qiyās*: cf. above note 217.

²⁹⁹ Cf. above note 192.

³⁰⁰ *Masā’il fi l-ṭibb lil-muta’allimīn li-Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq*, Abū Raiyān–‘Arab–Mūsā (1978); English trans. in Ghalioungui (1980).

‘Abd al-Laṭīf criticizes some of the opening passages on logic from the first part of *Kitāb al-iṣārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, which he quotes verbatim. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī states that the remark, “Logic is intended to give the human being a canonical tool which, if attended to, preserves him from error in his thought”,³⁰¹ indicates the purpose of logic, not its definition, since the purpose of logic is only a part of its definition. Then he considers Avicenna’s remark “Logic is the science by means of which one learns the kinds of movements from elements realized in the human mind to those whose realization is sought, including the states of elements, the number of types of order and form in the movements of the mind which occur in a valid manner and the types which are invalid”.³⁰² ‘Abd al-Laṭīf summarizes this remark as, “Logic is the science by means of which one learns the kinds of movements”, and he states that this is the description of the act of logic and also that logic is not a ‘science by means’ by which one learns. If logic is regarded as a science, it is not something by means of which one learns the movements of the mind, but if it is considered as an art, in that case, as an art, one can learn by means of logic the kinds of movement of the mind. Avicenna defined logic as a science in its essence in other places, so the above-mentioned remark is not correct (94r6–94v5).

At this point ‘Abd al-Laṭīf introduces a long digression on the epistemological status of logic. By defining logic as a canonical tool for human beings, Avicenna had to say that logic is at the same time a tool, an art and a science. Logic is a science in so far it discerns the classes of beings; it is a tool in so far it is used by human beings; and it is an art in so far as it is that by which one can learn. Of course, the aspect according to which logic is a science is not that according to which it is a tool, and the aspect according to which it is a tool is not that according to which it is an art, and finally the aspect according to which it is an art is not one and the same with the other two. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf states that logic is an intellectual art which inquires into intellectual objects like the categories, the affirmation and the negation.

‘Abd al-Laṭīf ends his analysis of the *Kitāb al-Iṣārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* by saying that he wanted to refer to that work as an example to facilitate his comparison between Avicenna and the Ancients; and between Avicenna’s books and his own – in spite of the fact that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf declares himself

³⁰¹ *Al-Iṣārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt li-Abī ‘Alī Ibn Sīnā*, 175:3–4 Dunya; English translation Inati (1984), 47.

³⁰² *Al-Iṣārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt li-Abī ‘Alī Ibn Sīnā*, 177:1–2 Dunya; English translation Inati (1984), 47–48.

to be the less important and the last in time; between Avicenna's speeches and his own on different topics such as time, space, the vacuum or other aspects of natural philosophy. 'Abd al-Laṭīf stresses that his own understanding of the above-mentioned topics and of the contents of the *Organon* surpasses that of Avicenna. He mentions the *Isagoge* (*Isāğūğī*), the *Categories* (*Maqūlāt*), the *De Interpretatione* (*ʿIbāra*) and the *Prior Analytics* (*Qiyās*) (fols 94r 6–95r 16). The problem, according to 'Abd al-Laṭīf, consists in the fact that many people have wasted their time studying Avicenna and his works instead of those of other philosophers, first of all the Peripatetics, and that Avicenna wrote so many bad works.³⁰³

I am saying that if only many people had occupied themselves with the books of the Peripatetics³⁰⁴ instead of occupying themselves with Avicenna's works they would have been able to compose better works than his, let alone their equal! – people like al-Ġazālī, Ibn Sahlān³⁰⁵ and others of high aspirations and pure understanding who have followed Avicenna.³⁰⁶

Among the defects which poured into the world because of Ibn Sīnā is the fact that he multiplied his compositions by making one derive from another and he dispersed and disseminated them through all the world (fol 95v 2–7).

In the last part of his diatribe, of less interest to us, 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī maintains that philosophy must be studied by those who possess the necessary intellectual faculties. 'Abd al-Laṭīf repeats here “the old topos that we know from Late Antiquity and encounter in early Islam and also in Avicenna, that philosophy should be taught only to those who are worthy of it and are able properly to use and appreciate it, for otherwise it will cause damage in society”.³⁰⁷ But, as observed by Gutas, the novelty consists in the fact that 'Abd al-Laṭīf applies this topos to a specific group of his time. In the following passages this clearly appears:

So (today) many of those who are not in reality followers of philosophy dare to study logic and philosophy. Philosophers, in fact, are those who have been trained in religious law, are accustomed to putting it in practice and are accustomed to behaving in an excellent fashion. With this they have come to possess excellent characters and extraordinary natural dispositions.

³⁰³ Cf. below 214–215.

³⁰⁴ *Al-Qawm*: From the point of view of Avicenna “le vulgaire opposé au sage, d'où le sens de non-philosophe...il s'agit de ceux qui professent une opinion réfutée par Ibn Sīnā”: Goichon (1938), 323. 'Abd al-Laṭīf ironically uses this word which indicates the true philosophers, those who at the end of his intellectual pilgrimage he will identify with the Peripatetics from Aristotle to al-Fārābī. Gutas (2011), 17 translates “scholars”.

³⁰⁵ For the entry on Ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī (d. 1145) cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. 1.830–1.

³⁰⁶ English translation in Gutas (2011), 20.

³⁰⁷ Cf. Gutas (2011), 18.

However (today), the dialecticians and experts in controversy from among the *fuqahā’* measure themselves with philosophy and they have fortified a little part of their principles, but they do not know how to make use of them and derive benefit from the discipline of logic in their dialectical discussion and their research or which part of logic is particularly applicable to *fiqh*; I really do not think that Ibn Sīnā has clarified it to them. They thus begin to believe that the art of logic is their task and affair and they have taken to explaining and talking expressly about hypothetical and categorical syllogisms, premises and conclusions, something which is the greatest depravation and the severest mental confusion (fol 95v 5–16).³⁰⁸

‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī says he has met experts in controversies and jurists (*fuqahā’*) who thought it was their job to study logic, and who peppered their speeches with logical terms they only half understood. The great *fuqahā’* of the past did not believe it necessary to embellish their works with similar ornaments devoid of any utility. Their arguments were of a logical nature, but they did not make any real use of logic, since, according to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, a man capable of eloquence can be a grammarian without directly using grammatical science. The only ancient *faqīh* to use logic was al-Māwardī,³⁰⁹ the only grammarian to do the same was al-Sarrāġ,³¹⁰ and the only *Ṣūfī* to use philosophy was al-Fāriqī.³¹¹ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s contemporaries, on the other hand, have filled their mouths with logical terms without any knowledge of their meaning.

The *fuqahā’* who preceded our contemporaries were much more learned than they are, of more simple abilities, but more effective in demonstration, and dialectically stronger, and with this they did not need that logic of little account which our contemporaries make use of. After that logic has made its appearance, there did not appear among them an excellent imam nor a treatise (of *fiqh*) as demanding as those found before our contemporaries. In fact, it is the characteristic of the excellent philosophers to use the power of logic in such disciplines as the art of *fiqh*, medicine, and grammar, without

³⁰⁸ Cf. Gutas (2011), 18, 20.

³⁰⁹ On al-Māwardī, *qāḍī* of Baṣra (974–1058), the author of important treatises on political theory such as the treatise entitled *Kitāb al-aḥkām al-sultāniyya* and the *Kitāb tashīl al-naẓar wa-ta’jīl al-zaḥār* cf. Brockelmann (1991), VI.869–870; Brockelmann (1943), I.386; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I.668; Rosenthal (1958), 27–37.

³¹⁰ Cf. above note 51; by this author, besides the treatise *al-Uṣūl al-kabīr* mentioned in the note above, is a work never completed and lost to us: the *Kitāb al-iṣṭiqāq*.

³¹¹ Ibn Nubāta Abū Yaḥyā ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Ḥuḍaḳī al-Fāriqī (d. 984–85), the famous author of sermons (*Ḥuṭab*) in rhymed prose and elaborate style on which ‘Abd al-Laṭīf wrote a commentary cf. 198, ii.6. The sermons of Ibn Nubāta al-Fāriqī can be divided into three distinct genres: 1. prayers to God and the Prophet, 2. exhortations to fear God and his final judgement and to observe the moral and religious laws, 3. invocations to God. Cf. Canard (1986), III. 899; Brockelmann (1943), I.92; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I.149–150.

however doing logic itself, just as the power of grammar is used in speech, not grammar itself.

Were a preacher to say, ‘O you people (*yā ayyuhā l-nāsu*), obey God and His messenger – now this (i.e. *nāsu*) is a vocative noun constructed [in Arabic] in the nominative’, he would be laughed at, made fun of, and dropped from the roster of preachers.³¹²

I do not know any of the *fuqahā*’ who have used the power of philosophy apart from al-Māwardī, *qāḍī* of Baṣra and author of the treatise *Kitāb al-aḥkām al-sultāniyya* and the treatise *Kitāb tashīl al-naẓar wa-ta’jīl al-ẓafar*. I do not know any grammarian after al-Ḥalīl ibn Aḥmad,³¹³ except Abū Bakr ibn al-Sarrāḡ, author of the *Uṣūl* and the *Kitāb al-istiḡāq*, which he never completed,³¹⁴ but he had already demonstrated competence and showed a profound knowledge of the art of logic at the beginning of the book. The same again is also the author of a treatise on the rules of the Arabic language. Finally, I do not know any of the *Ṣūfī* masters who makes use of the philosophical doctrine of the soul and who does not triumph over its speech except al-Fāriqī, and his discourse is well-known. As for those, on the other hand, who are full of themselves, they merely mention logic in their sessions with pompous ponderousness, without any mastery or knowledge of what it is they need from it and without even knowing how to make use of it. Philosophers, on the other hand, prohibit the divulging of logic and the teaching of philosophy to whomever presents himself, because not everyone is suited to every discipline and not everyone is suited to the sciences (fols 95v 16–96r 15).

The philosophers had warned ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī’s contemporaries and advised them against teaching logic and philosophy to everyone indiscriminately: a passage from Plato’s *Laws* of uncertain identification, probably derived from a compendium, is paraphrased to give greater stress to this idea.

In his treatise entitled *The Laws* Plato says: “for the one who follows reprehensible customs, who is inclined to evil and passions, the sciences renew his mind and he comprehends them, and this becomes for him a benefit, a weapon and a key to open the doors to which his soul inclines, and in this mechanical science (*al-Ḥiyāl*) is more efficient”³¹⁵ (fols 96r 16–96v 1).

³¹² English translation by Gutas (2011), 18. Gutas (2011), 19, notes that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s example “of the preacher making on the spot a grammatical analysis of a sentence he has just uttered, though clearly exaggerated, rings true; people apparently did try to win debates and arguments by name-dropping undigested logical concepts”.

³¹³ Al-Ḥalīl ibn Aḥmad (d. 791 or 786 or 776), legendary figure of Arabic philology and grammar, and master of (cf. above note 47). Cf. Sellheim (1990), IV.962–964; Brockelmann (1943), I.98–99; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I.159–160, Brockelmann (1942), suppl. III.1194; al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-udabā’*, 27.16–29.17 Amer; Carter (1972), 74–75.

³¹⁴ Cf. Gutas (2011), 19; the same in Yāqūt ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Rumī al-Ḥamawī, *Irṣād al-arīb ilā ma’rifat al-adīb* Margoliouth (1926), vii. 9–12.

³¹⁵ Cf. *Plato Arabus* III, *Alfarabius. Compendium Legum Platonis*, edidit et latine vertit F. Gabrieli, Warburg Inst., London 1952, repr. Kraus 1973, Arabic text. 19.11–16, cf. the Latin

ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī then reminds us that the biography of Avicenna by his followers recounts that he used to drink when writing his works³¹⁶ and that he used to practice sexual activities;³¹⁷ but a true philosopher must possess an impeccable moral character.

Furthermore, those who occupy themselves with what Avicenna said and who are expert in his speech, transmit from him that he used to drink wine and indulge in lechery and that he would write his books only when drunk or intoxicated. In this manner they began finding an expedient toward partaking of pleasures and indulgence in lechery, and they thought that [such behaviour] elevates them to the status of the elite and is the outcome of philosophy, while they considered the person who is chaste and steadfastly observant of religious laws to be a commoner and an idiot who could not advance to the level of philosophy and attain the rank of the elite. For this reason, common people lost faith in them and in their philosophy. Common people who associated with those who followed the behaviour of [the so-called philosophers] in blind imitation of them, and common people who were steadfast in their religion, considered them unbelievers, reviled their philosophy, and cautioned against it.

And justifiably so, because philosophy requires of its practioner the highest form of belief and points to the purest of deeds. Evil, by God, is the philosophy which indulges in pleasures and ridicule of religious law and of pious deeds! The philosopher is the friend of God and the beloved of God and he ought to draw near to Him by means of pious deeds, not debauchery. For had philosophy required such a thing, then ignorance would have better than it and the sinners among the common people would have been better than these philosophers! But if philosophy is the knowledge of God Almighty and an attempt to be like Him, and if it means that its love so takes possession of one's heart and overpowers him so that he is completely infatuated with it, how would there be left in him any means for pleasure or any care for carnal desire? By God, such a one lies when he claims to be a philosopher and to 'love wisdom' – he only loves his belly and his genitals (fol 96v 1–17)!³¹⁸

trans. by Gabrieli, 15: “this explains the right sense, that is, what attests to the truth, and goodness of the laws is the intellect and that the legislator (*sāhib al-nawāmīs*) must aim at those things which induce the intellect in the souls and take perfect care of them: and this because the more strongly legislator aiming is, the stronger and more stable are the laws. And that which generates the intellect is education; in fact he who lacks education takes pleasure in bad things, while he who possesses education delights only in good things”.

³¹⁶ In his autobiography Avicenna recounts how he devoted himself for a certain time to the study of logic and the syllogism and says that whenever he was unable to find the middle term of a syllogism, he would retire to the mosque invoking God and praying to him to resolve the difficulty for him and to make easy that which he found difficult; then, at night, he would return home, light his lamp and read and write. When he felt weak, he would drink a glass of wine to recover his strength and then continue to read: cf. Gutas (1988), 27.25–28.6.

³¹⁷ Cf. Gohlman (1974), 80–83.

³¹⁸ English translation by Gutas (2011), 20–21, partially modified.

Gutas has commented on this passage with great insight.³¹⁹ He states that here ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī responds to al-Ġazālī’s opening remarks of the *Tahāfut* where al-Ġazālī explains his purpose in writing such a work. Al-Ġazālī distinguished two different groups: the first group of people, who believe themselves to be in possession of a distinctiveness from their companions, have rejected the Islamic duties regarding acts of worship, have disdained religious rites pertaining of the offices of prayer and the avoidance of prohibited things, and have followed the ancient philosophers;³²⁰ the second group made up of the imbeciles among the masses have detached themselves from the errors of the first group.³²¹ Gutas observes that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf makes the same distinction and agreeing with al-Ġazālī states “that there are, indeed, some people who disregard Islamic practice thinking that as philosophers they do not need to obey it, and that the commoners who follow the rules are better than these people”.³²² But, of course, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf does not recognize in Greek philosophy the cause of such a bad behaviour because the true philosophy of the ancient Greek tradition was the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, the attempt to imitate God first of all through a pure way of life as testified to by all the biographies of the ancient philosophers.

Whoever reads books of biography knows how ascetic, pure, content, and abstemious in their way of life the philosophers of every nation were (fol 97r 3–4).³²³

‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī goes on by saying that the philosophers have stated that philosophy must not be taught except by those who rigorously observe the precepts of religious law. In fact, the moral precepts of philosophy are much more rigid than those of religious law, so that those who are not capable of conforming to the latter will be even less able to respect the former.

I will tell you a secret so amazing and of such momentous benefit that had this book of mine contained nothing but this alone, it would have been enough to lend honour [to my book]. It is the following: we have recounted about the philosophers that they said that philosophy ought not to be taught to anybody except to those who grew up according to prophetic practice and are accustomed to acting according to religious law. I will tell you the reason for this. This is that religious law accustoms one to be bound by its

³¹⁹ Cf. Gutas (2011), 22.

³²⁰ Marmura (1997), 1.11–2.23.

³²¹ Marmura (1997), 3.1–3.

³²² Cf. Gutas (2011), 22.

³²³ English translation by Gutas (2011), 21.

fetters to the point that one stops to its commandments and its prohibitions. But the fetters of philosophy are more numerous and heavier; so whoever is not accustomed to the fetters of religious law despite their lightness, how he will withstand the fetters of philosophy with all their weight? And how can one who used to sheer unfetteredness and total lack of any ties go over to heavy fetters and bits [of bridle] restricting most movements? But as for the person who is accustomed to the fetters of religious law, it is possible for him gradually to move towards the fetters of philosophy and to endure them because he would go over to them not all at once and as the one who has never followed the religious law, but after a lengthy and gradual process [beginning] from his early days and his first formation (97r 7–17).³²⁴

ʿAbd al-Latīf al-Baġdādī gives some examples: religious law prohibits adultery and allows a man to have four wives and as many beautiful concubines as he wishes; on the contrary, philosophy prohibits frequent sexual activity because it weakens body and soul in attaining the truth. Religious law prohibits certain drink and food and allows some others; philosophy prescribes strict continence in eating and drinking to avoid damage to the body and the soul. The same occurs concerning wealth: philosophy is much more rigid than religious law (fols 97r 17–97v 9).

ʿAbd al-Latīf concludes that religion sows in the human heart the belief in the oneness of God, creator and sustainer, and plants in it the desire for the deity. Religion consists of teaching that which concerns God and the ethical laws which derive from the very existence of God; what else is religion, then, but theoretical and practical philosophy together?

Philosophy is nothing else but verifying and confirming all this (i.e. the contents of religion), providing its causes and reasons, giving in detail its kinds and divisions, and offering demonstrative proofs for its existence and its necessity. When you examine theoretical and practical philosophy, you will find that what they include does not depart from whatever religious law offers. It seems as if religious law plants and prescribes all this thoroughly, and kneads it into our natures ever since childhood in a way that enables all men, despite their various ranks and stations (*scil.* in life), to participate in it, and then philosophy is appropriate for some of them and for those among them who have aptitude. But those who fall outside of this group [who grow up without religious law] are counted among dumb beasts and philosophy cannot be applied to dumb beasts. Had religious law not established for us that we have a deity to the point that we became accustomed to it and trusted it, we would have had to spend a long time on philosophy before we overcame our recalcitrance on this matter because of it. In this way, everything that religious law provides is nothing but an introduction (*tawṭīʿatun*) to philosophy. Plato and Aristotle explained how religious law is derived

³²⁴ English translation by Gutas (2011), 23, partially modified.

from philosophy, how religious law is made to be introductory to philosophy, how philosophy is made to assist religious law, and that the two of them are closely related sisters helping each other to perfect human kind so that each one of them can attain the perfection which is possible and appropriate for him (fol 98r 2–15).³²⁵

Religion prescribes investigating creation: the heavens, sun, moon, stars, earth, and animals;³²⁶ philosophy searches for the reasons and the causes of all these creatures (fol. 98v 4–8). Religion and philosophy are then for ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī identical.

If this subject had been my intention at this moment, I could have put together an argument and composed a scholarly discussion on what religious law says on this topic, and I would have shown how every single item in it corresponds to every single item found in the books of the philosophers. I would have done this with regards to both theoretical and practical philosophy, and I would have started on this from physics in accordance with their order and then metaphysics in accordance with their order. And I would have done the same with practical philosophy (98v 9–14).³²⁷

Gutas recalls that here we have “a statement of the single truth theory, very much along the lines argued by Averroes, though it does not seem that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī knew Averroes”.³²⁸ It is also possible to see Farabian sources behind ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s position: al-Fārābī presents similar statements in the *Tahṣīl al-Sa’āda*, as we will see, certainly known by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf.³²⁹

³²⁵ English translation by Gutas (2011), 24.

³²⁶ Gutas (2011), 24, indicates the following references: Koran 3.191; 10.5; 51.12.

³²⁷ English translation by Gutas (2011), 24.

³²⁸ Gutas (2011), 24; M. Geoffroy has pointed out to me in his revision of this part of my book that there is a passage nearly identical in Averroes’ *al-Kaṣf ‘an manāhiġ al-adilla*. So ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s possible knowledge of Averroes must probably be reconsidered.

³²⁹ Mahdi (2001), 44: “Every instruction is composed of two things: (a) making what is being studied comprehensible and causing its idea to be established in the soul and (b) causing others to assent to what is comprehended and established in the soul. There are two ways of making a thing comprehensible: first, by causing its essence to be perceived by the intellect, and second, by causing it to be imagined through the similitude that imitates it. Assent, too, is brought by one of two methods, either the method of certain demonstration or the method of persuasion. Now when one acquires knowledge of the beings or receives instruction in them, if he perceives their ideas themselves with his intellect, and his assent to them is by means of certain demonstration, then the science that comprises these cognitions is philosophy. But if they are known by imagining them through similitudes that imitate them, and assent to what is imagined of them is caused by persuasive methods, then the Ancients call what comprises these cognitions religion... Therefore according to the Ancients, religion is an imitation of philosophy. Both comprise the same subjects and both give an account of the ultimate principles of the beings. For both supply knowledge about the first principle and cause of the beings, and both give an account of

The condition which is necessary, but not sufficient, for becoming a true philosopher is the natural disposition of the individual to learn the theoretical sciences and to assume a virtuous lifestyle conforming to religious norms. Al-Fārābī himself says he has taken the idea from Plato's *Republic*. Those who do not live in conformity with the real moral implications of philosophy are pseudo-philosophers. In the distinction between the philosopher according to truth and the counterfeit, false, or vain philosopher, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī refers to and quotes al-Fārābī's *Taḥṣīl al-saʿāda*, where the characteristics proper to the philosopher are indicated.

The counterfeit, false, or vain philosopher is he who starts to study the theoretical sciences without being adequately prepared for them as Plato has prescribed in the *Republic* where he said that he should excel in comprehending and conceiving the thing and, in particular, the thing which is essential. He should have good memory and be able to endure the toil of investigation. He should love according to his nature truthfulness and truthful people, and justice and just people: and not be headstrong or a wrangler about what he desires. He should not be gluttonous for food or drink, and should by natural disposition disdain the appetites, the *dirham*, and the *dinar*. He should love learning and study. He should be high-minded and avoid what is considered disgraceful. He should be calm, yield easily to goodness and justice, and be stubborn in yielding to evil and injustice. And he should be strongly determined in favour of the right thing, and hardly inflexible against wrong thing. Moreover, he should be brought up according to laws and habits that resemble his innate disposition. He should have sound conviction about the opinion of the religion in which he is reared, hold fast to the virtuous acts in his religion, and not forsake all or most of them. He should hold fast to the generally accepted virtues. For if a youth is in such a way and then sets out to study philosophy and learns it, it is possible that he will not become a counterfeit philosopher or a vain philosopher or a false philosopher.

The false philosopher is he who acquires the theoretical sciences without achieving the utmost perfection in being able to introduce others to what he knows insofar as their capacity permits.

The vain philosopher is he who learns the theoretical sciences, but without having been educated and without having been habituated to doing the acts considered virtuous in a certain religion and considered noble by the multitude. Instead he follows his own inclination and appetites in everything which may happen to be.

the ultimate end for the sake of which man is made – that is, supreme happiness – and the ultimate end of every one of the other beings. In everything of which philosophy gives an account based on intellectual perception or conception, religion gives an account based on imagination. In everything demonstrated by philosophy, religion employs persuasion". Cf. Martini Bonadeo (2008), 208–210.

Although the counterfeit philosopher and the vain philosopher may complete the study of the theoretical sciences, in the end their possession of them diminishes little by little. By the time they reach the age at which a man should become perfect in the virtues, their knowledge will have been extinguished, even more so than the extinction of the fire of Heraclitus mentioned by Plato. For the natural disposition of the former and the habits of the latter overpower what they have corroborated in their youth and make it burdensome for them to retain what they had patiently toiled for. They neglect it, and what they retain begins to diminish little by little until it becomes completely ineffective and extinguished and they gather no fruit from it and no benefit because of it.

As for the false philosopher, he is the one who is not yet aware of the purpose for which philosophy is pursued. He acquires the theoretical sciences, or only some portion thereof and holds the opinion that the purpose of the measure he has acquired consists in certain kinds of happiness that are believed to be so or are considered by the multitude to be good things. Therefore he rests there to enjoy that happiness, aspiring to achieve for himself this purpose. He may hardly achieve his purpose. And so he holds the opinion that the knowledge he has is superfluous. Such is the false philosopher.

As for the true philosopher, he is the one mentioned before and described more than once in the texts by Plato and by al-Fārābī, and all the true philosophers are in full and strong agreement on this principle and their acts and their ways of life confirm their speeches (fols 98v 17–99v 17).³³⁰

Finally ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī claims that he has been criticized by the contemporary pseudo-philosophers who follow Avicenna and that he has been attacked because of his vehement criticism of Avicenna and because of the fact that he does not share their moral depravation. In particular he is strongly opposed by the alchemists because he does not believe in the existence of elixirs. As we see and have seen from this passage and from Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a’s account of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s education, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf developed two strong aversions: the first towards Avicenna, his writings and his followers; the second, as we shall see in the next paragraph devoted to his own writings, towards alchemy, which he had studied, but had then abandoned, not considering it to be a scientific discipline, but an irrational practice.

‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī ends his work by praising God, lord of the world.

³³⁰ Cf. al-Fārābī, *Kitāb Taḥsīl al-sa‘āda*, in *Rasā’il al-Fārābī*, 44.14–46.12; Mahdi (2001), 48–49.

3. *The Ancient Lists of the Works of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī and the Testimony of Manuscript Bursa, Hüseyin Çelebi 823*

‘Abd-al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī was a prodigious writer, and many of his works are still in manuscript form. In this case, the precise whereabouts of the few manuscripts in the various libraries of the Near East, Asia, and Europe are known. My aim here is not so much to compile a complete list of his works to fill the existing vacuum – than as task that would require years of research and exploration of manuscript collections – as to present the fields of study which he devoted himself to within the context of his intellectual biography. This is possible due to the ancient lists of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s works and the list in the miscellaneous manuscript Bursa, *Hüseyin Çelebi*, 823.

The oldest list of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s works is that given by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a at the end of his biography of our author.³³¹ A second, later, list is found in the *Fawāt al-Wafayāt* by Ibn Šakir al-Kutubī.³³²

The list presented by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a is very long and numbers one hundred and seventy-three works, including brief essays and treatises. I will not give all the titles here, but indicate the disciplines concerned: the subjects are extremely varied and reflect the variety of our author’s interests.

Thirteen writings are listed which deal with the Arabic language, lexicography, and grammar, two with *fiqh*, nine with literary criticism, fifty-three with medicine, ten with zoology,³³³ three on the science of *tawḥīd*, three on history, three on mathematics and related disciplines, two on magic and mineralogy, and twenty-seven on other themes.

³³¹ Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, II. 211.1–213.16 Müller.

³³² Ibn Šakir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, II. 385.1–388.2 ‘Abbās.

³³³ Kruk (2008), 345–362, observes that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s name repeatedly turns up in the zoological sections of post-thirteenth-century encyclopaedic works in connection with descriptions of animals living in Egypt, but none of these references are traceable to the section on the animals of Egypt of the *Kitāb al-ṭfāda wa-l-‘tibār*. This fact means that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf devoted other works to zoology. In some of these references there is an explicit mention of a *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* (*Book on the Animals*) or to a *Kitāb ṭabā’i’ al-ḥayawān* (*On the Natures of Animals*) of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s hand. No such title is included in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a’s list, but several titles are related to zoology: Kruk (2008), 346. In particular, among others, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a mentions a *Kitāb al-mudhiš fī aḥbār al-ḥayawān* (*Book of Amazing Things Which are Said of Animals*) and three different compendia of older animal books by Aristotle, al-Ġāhiz, and Ibn Abī al-Aš‘at. Kruk (2008), analyzes the following questions: did a *Book on the Animals* by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf exist; could it circulate under the name *Book of Amazing Things Which are Said of Animals*; or, alternatively, was it a compendium which included materials from the three other compendia. Through the study of the textual evidence Kruk concluded that a *Book on the Animals* circulated under the name of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, but that very little is known about it.

There are forty-eight works concerning philosophy: nineteen on logic,³³⁴ ten on physics, eight on metaphysics, and nine on politics. Two general works are also mentioned, divided into three sections: logic, physics, and metaphysics; one of these is in ten volumes and was completed by the author over a span of twenty years.

Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī's list is shorter. It numbers fifteen discourses by 'Abd al-Laṭīf which are not mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a and eighty-one works, all mentioned, with the exception of one³³⁵ in the previous list.

The works which have come down to us – or at least those contained in manuscripts so far identified³³⁶ – are the following:

- i. *Ḥadīṭ*, lexicography, and grammar
 1. *Al-Muğarrad li-luḡat al-ḥadīṭ* (*Compendium for the Language of Ḥadīṭ*): cf. above note 93; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 881; edited in al-Rādī (1977); al-Rādī (1979).
 2. *Mulaḥḥaṣ kitāb maqālat al-tāğ fi ṣīfat al-Nabī* (*Extract from the Book of the Essay on the Diadem in the Swords of the Prophet*): cf. Brockelmann (1943), I. 633.
 3. *Šarḥ Futūḥ al-waqt* ('Abd al-Laṭīf al-Bağdādī's commentary on the caliph al-Nāṣir's collection of traditions entitled *Rawḥ al-ʿarīfīn*): Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 881; Stern (1962), 56.
 4. *Al-Tağrīd min alfāz rasul allāh wa-l-ṣaḥāba wa-l-tābiʿīn* (*Extract from the Expressions of the Prophet and the Companions of the Prophet and his Followers*): cf. Brockelmann (1943) I. 633.
- ii. *Fiqh*
 5. *Lumaʿ al-qawānīn al-muḍrāʿa fī dawāwīn al-diyār al-miṣriyya* (*Brief Study of the Laws in the Codes of Egypt*): cf. Brockelmann (1937) suppl. I. 881.
 6. *Šarḥ Dīwān Abī Yaḥyā ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn Nubāta al-Fāriqī* (*Commentary on the Collection by Abū Yaḥyā ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn Nubāta al-Fāriqī*): cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 881.

³³⁴ Among 'Abd al-Laṭīf's works on logic there are two polemical writings against Avicenna: the *Treatise Showing the Counterfeit Character of What Abū ʿAlī ibn Sīnā believes Concerning the Existence of Conditional Syllogisms giving Conditional Conclusions* and the *Treatise Showing the Counterfeit Character of the Conditional Syllogisms That Avicenna Thinks Exist* (Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbāʿ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*, II. 211.1–213.16 Müller).

³³⁵ II *Kitāb al-diryāq* (*Treatise of Antidotes*): cf. Ibn Šākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, II. 387.5 'Abbās.

³³⁶ Scholars working on 'Abd al-Laṭīf tried to identify the manuscripts which preserve his works, both those mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a and those not. Cf. De Sacy (1810), 493–494; Brockelmann (1943), I. 632–633; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 880–881; Zand-Videan–Videan (1965), 6–7; Ghalioungui–Abdou (1972), 22–39.

iii. Medicine³³⁷

7. *Šarḥ Taqdimat al-ma’rifā li-Ibbuqrāt* (Commentary on the Prognostics according to Hippocrates): cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 880–881; Sezgin (1970), III. 33; Joosse–Pormann (2012).
8. *Šarḥ Fuṣūl Ibbuqrāt* (Commentary on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates): cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 880–881; Sezgin (1970), III. 30–31; Joosse–Pormann (2012a).
9. *Šarḥ al-Masā’il al-ṭibbiyya* (Commentary on [Ḥunayn’s] Medical Questions): cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 880–881.
10. *Ta’līq ‘alā Tašriḥ Lutfallāh al-Miṣrī* (Commentary on the Anatomy of Lutfallāh al-Miṣrī): cf. Zand–Videan–Videan (1965), 7.
11. *Ḥāšiya ‘alā Tašriḥ šarḥ al-Tanqīḥ* (Note on the Anatomy of the Commentary on the Revision): cf. Brockelmann (1957), suppl. I. 881.
12. *Fī Uṣūl mufradāt al-ṭibb wa-kayfiyyāt ṭabā’i’i-hā* (On the Principles of Simple Medical Substances and their Natural Qualities) in ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ar. 2870, 128r-172v: cf. Joosse–Pormann (2010), 6.

iv. History

13. *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-i’tibār* (Book of the Report and the Account of the Things which I Witnessed and the Events Seen in the Land of Egypt): cf. above note 6.

v. Mathematics

13. *Al-Muḡnī al-ḡalī fī l-ḥisāb al-hindī* (Book of That Which is Evident in Indian Mathematics): cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I. 881; cf. above 177.

vi. Philosophy

14. *Maqāla fī l-ḥawāss wa-masā’il ṭāniya fī l-ḥawāss* (Essay on the Senses and Two Questions on their Function): cf. Brockelmann (1943), I. 633. This work has been edited in Ghalioungui – Abdou (1972).
15. *Masā’il ṭabī’iyya* (Questions on Natural History) edited in Ghalioungui–Abdou (1972).
16. *Kitāb fī ‘ilm mā ba’d al-ṭabī’a* (The Book on the Science of Metaphysics): cf. below chapter III.

³³⁷ The book *Kitāb al-Ṭibb min al-kitāb wa-l-sunna* (Book of the Medicine Which is Derived from the Book and the Tradition) often attributed to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf (cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I, 881) was written by al-Ḍahabī (d. 1348): cf. above note 5. The book *Kitāb al-Arba’in al-ṭibbiyya* (Forty Medical Traditions) often attributed to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf was written by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s student al-Birzālī: cf. Joosse–Pormann (2010), 7.

Besides these works another eleven treatises have been preserved – among which is the *Kitāb al-Naṣīhatayn* already mentioned – in the miscellaneous manuscript *Hüseyin Çelebi*, 823, the only one accessible to me besides the two which contain the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*. The manuscript *Hüseyin Çelebi*, 823, discovered in Bursa in 1959 by Stern and described by him, gives us a full awareness of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s intellectual activity. The treatises contained in it, besides the *Kitāb al-Naṣīhatayn*, are the following:

1. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s criticism of the notes written by Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī on several passages from the *Kulliyāt* section of Avicenna’s *Qānūn*³³⁸ (*Al-Awrāt allatī ‘amiltuhā ‘alā kitāb Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-ma’rūf bi-Ibn Ḥaṭīb al-Rayy allaḏī ‘amilahū ‘alā ba‘ḏ al-ġuz’ al-awwal min kitāb al-Qānūn wa-huwa al-mulaqqab bi-kulliyāt*: fols 1v-19v and 28r-34r).

Cf. Stern (1962), 57–58. From Ġīgūriyūs ibn al-Ibrī Barhebraeus (Ġīgūriyūs ibn al-Ibrī Barhebraeus, *Ta’rīḥ muḥtaṣar al-duwal*, 240.13–17 Ṣāliḥānī al-Yasū‘ī) we know that Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī had written this work in Saraḥs in 580/1185 to dedicate it to the doctor ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Saraḥsī in recognition for his generous hospitality. A certain number of manuscripts of this work have survived: cf. Brockelmann (1943), I, 587; Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I, 824. In the preface ‘Abd al-Laṭīf alludes to a dedicatee whose name, however, he does not give. This is in reality Rašīd al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Ḥalīfa, the uncle of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a (Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, II, 212.6–8 Müller) whose biography has been left to us by the latter (ibidem, II, 246–248). In around 597/1200 Rašīd al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Ḥalīfa returned to Damascus from Cairo. At that time he was particularly interested in the works of modern authors, but when in Damascus he read Aristotle’s *Physics* under the guidance of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, who had already been his master in Cairo, he was immediately convinced of the inferior nature of contemporary writers and deplored the time he had wasted in studying their treatises. Still in the preface³³⁹ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf explains what had led him to write the work. He had in fact

³³⁸ Cf. above note 192.

³³⁹ See the partial French translation in Gannagé (2011), 227–256, in particular 252–254.

just managed to acquire in Damascus a manuscript which contained these notes by Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, but, once he had the work in his hands, he realized that it conformed to the low scientific level of the works of modern writers. In a single night he set down some critical observations, but he had been so disgusted by the work of Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī that he did not even want to re-read them, so before leaving Turkey, 'Abd al-Laṭīf sent them in this temporary version to Aleppo to a pupil of his who had asked for them. The polemical outbursts of this work that were written straight off, says 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, have a precise aim: if any future reader should be inclined to hold all of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's contemporaries to be fools for having esteemed Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī without confuting his errors, this writing will represent the exception. 'Abd al-Laṭīf's opinion of Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī is caustic: Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī is, as far as it is possible, worse than Avicenna. Thanks to God, in writing his notes on the *Kullīyyāt* section, he stopped at the passage on the circulation and went no further. 'Abd al-Laṭīf thus renews his invitation to turn to the books of the Ancients: those of Aristotle and his faithful interpreter in philosophy, al-Fārābī, and those of Galen in medicine.

2. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's criticism of the treatise *Sūrat al-Iḥlās* (*The Sura of Pure Intention*) by Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (*Qawl li-'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf 'alā ḥāl Ibn ḥaṭīb al-Rayy fī tafsīr sūrat al-Iḥlās*: fols 34r-38v and 20r-23r).

Cf. Stern (1962), 58–59. This work, mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II. 211.8 Müller, was written in Aleppo in 613/1216. In this treatise 'Abd al-Laṭīf presents two sets of reasons why the works of Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, full of errors, should not be the object of peoples' admiration. In the first place this writer does not possess a specific technical knowledge of the various sciences which he has decided to consider: he makes an incorrect use of medical terminology, for example, as 'Abd al-Laṭīf says he has demonstrated in his confutation of al-Rāzī's notes on Avicenna's *Qānūn*. In the second place, since he lacks any didactic method, he simply raises continual sophisms. For these reasons, 'Abd al-Laṭīf maintains that he should not even try to take on the holy text of the Koran. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī then moves on to demolish Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary on sūra 112 and states that he does not

want to go on and criticize *sūra* 95 and *sūra* 87 as well, both of them commented on by al-Rāzī.

3. The treatise *On the Quiddity of Space According to Ibn al-Hayṭam* (*An māhiyyat al-makān bi-ḥasabi ra'yi Ibn al-Hayṭam*: fols 23v-27v and 39r-52r).

Cf. Stern (1962), 59. This treatise is mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'* II. 213.9 Müller with the title *Fī l-Radd 'alā Ibn al-Hayṭam fī al-makān*. It has been edited and translated into French by Rashed (2002), 4, 908–53 and it is one of the most interesting treatises contained in the manuscript. 'Abd al-Laṭīf says he has tackled the theme of *al-makān* in various of his treatises on logic and physics, that he has proved the validity of Aristotle's definition whereby *al-makān* is the *saḥḥ muḥīṭ* or *saḥḥ ḥāwī*, the enveloping or containing surface, i.e. the inner surface of the containing body that is in contact with the outer surface of what it contains (Aristotle, *Phys.* Δ, 4, 212a 6 τὸ πέρασ τοῦ περιέχοντασ σῶματοσ) and that he has rejected other definitions of *al-makān* opposed to that of Aristotle. Among these latter is also the definition by Ibn al-Hayṭam, for whom place is *ḥalā'* *al-mutaḥayyal*, imagined void whose existence is secured by imagination. According to Ibn al-Hayṭam the 'imagined void' *qua* 'geometrized place' consisted of imagined immaterial distances that are between the opposite points of the surfaces surrounding it: Rashed (2002), IV, 66g; El-Bizri (2007), 63. 'Abd al-Laṭīf's attempt to refute Ibn al-Hayṭam's geometrization of place demonstrates great rigour and accuracy in presenting Ibn al-Hayṭam's arguments. 'Abd al-Laṭīf maintains Ibn al-Hayṭam to be a scholar of respect and holds that his work must be analyzed very carefully. He then reproduces his treatise paragraph by paragraph and comments on it in detail, using the Alexandrine form of textual exegesis. El-Bizri (2007), 57–80, points out that 'Abd al-Laṭīf's attempt to refute Ibn al-Hayṭam's geometrization of place is more generally speaking a defence of the sovereignty of philosophy against mathematics.

4. The treatise *On Mixing* (*Maqāla fī al-Mizāğ*: fols 52v-62r).

Cf. Stern (1962), 59. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II. 212.6 Müller, under the title *Fī al-Mizāğ*, concerns the combination of various elements in compound substances.

5. The *Dispute Between an Alchemist and a Theoretic Philosopher* (*Risāla fī muḡādalat al-ḥakīmayn al-kīmiyā’ī wa-l-naẓarī*: fols 100v-123v).

Cf. Stern (1962), 66–67. This dispute is mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, II. 213.6 Müller, with the title *Kitāb al-muḥākama bayna al-ḥakīm wa-al-kīmiyā’ī*; the critical edition and a German translation are in an unpublished PhD dissertation: F. Allemann, ‘Abdallaṭīf al-Baġdādī: *Ris. fī Muḡādalat al-ḥakīmayn al-kīmiyā’ī wa-l-naẓarī* („Das Streitgespräch zwischen dem Alchemisten und dem theoretischen Philosophen“). *Eine textkritische Bearbeitung der Handschrift: Bursa, Hüseyin Çelebi 823, fol. 100–123 mit Übersetzung und Kommentar*, PhD diss (University of Bern, 1988). Joosse (2008), 302 reports that the treatise was written during ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s first visit to Aleppo (1216–1220), and was most probably revised in the city of Erzinjan in the year 622 by the author himself. Dietrich (1964), 106, maintains that despite the fact that the names of the alchemist and the theoretical philosopher in question do not appear, the dialogue seems to be historical rather than fictional. Joosse (2008), 302, partially agrees with Dietrich, maintaining that the dispute, most likely a fiction, must be partly based on discussions between ‘Abd al-Laṭīf and his former advisors and mentors like Ibn al-Nā’ili³⁴⁰ and Yāsīn al-Sīmiyā’ī.³⁴¹ In this dispute ‘Abd al-Laṭīf apparently seems to discuss the truth and the epistemological status of alchemy, but he soon openly states that alchemy cannot have a place in any system of the sciences, because it is a complete fraud: the false alchemists are all engaged in the production of elixirs or the “Philosophers’ stone”. They believe “in the substantial transmutation of metals and thought that the ‘differentia specifica’ of metals could be produced during an artificial process, which in the end would always lead to the transformation of lead and other base metals into precious metals gold and silver”.³⁴² In this dispute the philosopher lists many foolish situations produced by the practice of alchemy: the judges neglect their public duties to produce elixirs, and teachers leaves their classes to carry out some experiments. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf mentions, for example, the case of a judge from Baalbek who, believing that elixir was blood, buried more than 18 kg

³⁴⁰ Cf. above page 111 and note 59.

³⁴¹ Cf. above page 120 and note 113.

³⁴² Joosse (2008), 304.

of blood in secret. Then he produced a genuine silver *dirham*, pretending that he produced the coin himself so has not to look a fool. Then this judge went on to believe that urine was the true “Philosophers’ stone” and collected seven hundred earthenware jugs of urine for a special price. For many of these anecdotes see Joosse (2008), 311–16. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf observes that in the writings of the Ancients alchemy is never mentioned: Pythagoras has not devoted a treatise to it, Plato and Aristotle never speak of it, and thus neither do the Greek commentators after them. There is not a single word on alchemy in all of Galen’s voluminous works, nor in that of John Philoponus. In the Islamic age al-Ġāhiz, Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, his son Isḥāq, his grandson Ḥunayn, Abū Bišr Mattā, and Abū l-Faraġ ibn al-Ṭayyib are all quiet on the subject. The father of this false science would seem to have been Ġābir ibn Ḥayyān (cf. above 121 where ‘Abd al-Laṭīf says he has studied the entire corpus of works attributed to Ġābir) who has turned generations of students after him astray – those like Abū Bakr al-Rāzī for example – as can be seen from his treatise on physics *Sam‘ al-kiyān*. At this point ‘Abd al-Laṭīf quotes a passage from Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Kitāb al-imtā‘ wa-l-mu‘ānasa*, I.35.3–36.10 Amīn–Al-Zayn, where he criticizes Miskawayh for his attention to alchemy. Al-Fārābī, the greatest of Islamic philosophers, mentions elixirs (*al-iksīr*) in a highly negative way only once. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf then quotes the *Risāla fī wuġūb šinā‘at al-kīmiyā‘* by al-Fārābī, in which alchemy is mentioned (fols 115v–116v). In his treatise on alchemy Avicenna does not give to this art a rational basis;³⁴³ al-Ġazālī, says ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, seems to have written a treatise on alchemy. Šihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī was merely a naive young man. What the mystic Ibn al-‘Arabī believes, whose intelligence ‘Abd al-Laṭīf esteems, does not fall into the context of rational argumentation and therefore it is difficult to judge its truth of falsehood. Cf. Joosse (2008), 301–17.

6. The treatise *On Minerals and the Confutation of Alchemy* (*Risāla fī l-ma‘ādin wa-ibṭāl al-kīmiyā‘*: fols 124r–132r).

Cf. Stern (1962), 59, 67; Sezgin (1971), IV, 9, 289. This treatise is mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *Uyūn al-anbā‘ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā‘*,

³⁴³ Cf. Joosse (2008), 308.

II. 213.6–7 Müller, with the title *Risāla fī l-ma‘ādin wa-ibtāl al-kīmiyā*. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf distinguishes in it between useful and positive operations which regard the melting and working of metals, of which, he says, there is a trace in the works of the Ancients, and the presumptions of alchemy. This work also provides the dating of the manuscript

7. *Excerpta* from the works of the philosophers chosen by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī (*Fuṣūl muntaza‘a min kalām al-ḥukamā’*: fols 132v-135v).

Cf. Stern (1962), 67–68. The *Excerpta* are mentioned Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*, II. 212.14 Müller with the title *Fuṣūl muntaza‘a min kalām al-ḥukamā’*. The critical edition and a French translation are in Rashed (2004), 9–63. Stern maintains that they deal with problems regarding genus and species, common sense, being in potency and in act and that the last part, on the difference between genus and matter, is based on the treatise by Alexander of Aphrodisias entitled *On the Difference between Genus and Matter*, which is preserved in manuscript El Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo, *Derenbourg* 798. Stern also believes that the first part of the treatise probably has among its sources writings by Alexander of Aphrodisias. Rashed (2004), 12–13, observes that these *excerpta* discuss problems which are related to those discussed by Alexander of Aphrodisias in his personal works and gives the following list of the arguments presented by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf:

T1. Fols 132v-133r, *Incipit*: “La chose universelle mentale est un genre qui n’a absolument pas d’existence à l’extérieur...”

T2. Fols 133r-v, *Incipit*: “Question: Si les genres se divisent en formes et en espèces et si tout ce qui se divise en des choses en est composé, il est alors nécessaire que le genre soit composé de ses espèces”.

T3. Fols 133v-134v, *Incipit*: “Question: Comment les contraires se réunissent-ils dans la sensation commune?”

T4. Fols 134v-135r, *Incipit*: “Question: tout engendré a puissance de recevoir la génération d’un agent ayant puissance d’engendrer...”

T5. Fols 135r-v, *Incipit*: “Question sur la matière et le genre”.

Rashed (2004), 14, recognizes as their sources the *Quaestiones* I 11a, II 28, III 9 and a new Arabic *Quaestio*, work number 39 ascribed to Alexander of Aphrodisias in Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a’s list of Alexander’s works.

8. The treatise *On Specific Difference* by Alexander of Aphrodisias (*Risāla li-l-Iskandar fī ḥāṣṣatan wa-mā huwa*: fols 136r-137v).

Cf. Stern (1962), 68. This is a partial copy of Alexander of Aphrodisias' treatise *On Differentia Especially, What It Is*, the only treatise in this manuscript of which 'Abd al-Laṭīf is not the author (nor the compiler, as in the case of the previous *excerpta*). The complete text is found in the Damascus manuscript edited by Badawī (1947), 295–308. The first part deals with the question of whether it is possible for the same difference to be predicated of more than one genus; the second part deals with the problem of whether the difference of a genus is under the genus itself or if it is another genus. The version contained in the Damascus manuscript edited by Badawī was translated by Abū 'Uṭmān Sa'īd ibn Ya'qūb al-Dimašqī, while the text contained in this manuscript is presented in an older translation, as can be seen by its more archaic terminology. Dietrich (1964) has devoted a detailed study to this little treatise.

9. *Excerpta* from medical works chosen by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī (*Fuṣūl ṭibbiyya intaza'a-hā 'Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf*: fols 138r-140v): cf. Dietrich (1967), 42–40.

Cf. Stern (1962), 68. The *Excerpta* are not mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a. They take the form of a little handbook of pharmacology, which presents the therapeutic effects of thirty-one different plants. Cf. Dietrich (1967), 42–60.

10. The treatise *On Diabetes* (*Fī l-Maraḍ al-musammā diyābītā*: fols 140v-149r).

Cf. Stern (1962), 68–69. The treatise is mentioned by Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II. 212.1 Müller under the title *Fī dyābīṭas*. After a brief description of the symptomatology and the therapy of the illness, 'Abd al-Laṭīf collects everything that has been written on its treatment by ancient and Arabic authors. The treatise *On Diabetes* has been studied and translated by Thies (1971). Cf. also Degen (1977), 455–462.

From this rapid description of the treatises contained in the manuscript Bursa, *Hüseyin Çelebi*, 823 and on the basis of the information taken from

the ancient lists of our author's works, there emerge additional details which go on to enrich the picture of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī already outlined by the two biographies examined above.

'Abd al-Laṭīf received a solid training in the traditional Islamic disciplines, which were for him, in his mature years, subjects he taught in the most important mosques of his time. Nevertheless, he never held Islamic knowledge to be in contradiction with the knowledge of the Ancients; indeed he thought that a critical awareness of the appropriate method for the science under examination came to the scholar of the Koranic sciences precisely from the knowledge of the Ancients. His criticisms of the writings of Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī can be explained in this sense: the latter was not only unable to tackle the study of the science of the Ancients, and in particular medicine, because he did not have properties of language and method, and precisely because he had no didactic competence and method, he should not even have set out to tackle the sacred text of the Koran.

'Abd al-Laṭīf constantly held authors defined by him as "moderns" distinct from the Ancients and he unleashed a harsh polemic attack against the works of the former. His privileged targets were Avicenna and Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī whom he considered, as far as it was possible, worse even than Avicenna. The writings of these authors in fact, if compared with those of the Ancients on similar themes, reveal their low scientific level, are confused, and lack detailed analysis, as can be seen in the criticisms of Avicenna's logical writings. 'Abd al-Laṭīf maintained the need therefore to return to the books of the Ancients and in particular those of Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias and al-Fārābī in philosophy, and those of Hippocrates and Galen in medicine.

His stay in Cairo gave him a profound knowledge of the philosophy of Aristotle and his interpreters. From the list of his works, in fact, he seems to have written treatises which cover the entire Aristotelian corpus. There is also frequent mention of the treatises of Alexander of Aphrodisias, a writer who was a point of reference for 'Abd al-Laṭīf: as we have seen he had a treatise of Alexander's copied. The same can be said of al-Fārābī, the only philosopher of the Islamic age deemed worthy of study by 'Abd al-Laṭīf. Often, as we have seen in the *Kitāb al-Naṣīḥatayn*, al-Fārābī's writings were paraphrased by 'Abd al-Laṭīf and inserted into his own. The very notion of science which transpires from the work of 'Abd al-Laṭīf, a systematic corpus capable of integrating Islamic and ancient knowledge, as we have seen in the first chapter, derives from al-Fārābī.

As far as medicine is concerned, 'Abd al-Laṭīf has an attitude analogous to that he has in philosophy. He criticizes Avicenna and Faḥr al-Dīn

al-Rāzī and wishes for a return to Hippocrates and Galen. He was an active promoter of this return: from the list of his works he seems to have commented on or summarized many of Hippocrates' and Galen's writings. Nevertheless he was not a sterile compiler of the medical works of the Ancients whom he followed blindly, but knew how to unite the knowledge derived from them with his own talent at observation, as we can see from his treatise on diabetes, in which he follows all that has been written by ancient and Arabic authors on its cure by a description of the symptomatology of the illness. Another example of this attitude can be found in the last chapter of the *Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-ītibār*³⁴⁴ where, as we have seen, he discusses the bone structure of the lower jawbone and corrects Galen's opinion that it was made up of two bones instead of one and then discusses the sacrum-coccyx complex which, according to Galen, was made up of six bones, while 'Abd al-Laṭīf held it to be formed by a point of reference a single bone.³⁴⁵

Finally 'Abd al-Laṭīf was profoundly averse to alchemy, which was much in vogue in his time. It can in no way be placed in the system of the sciences. Alchemy and its false presumptions must be distinguished from scientific knowledge which can be given a rational basis, such as mathematics, mineralogy, chemistry, zoology, and botany. Proof of this is that the Ancients never spoke of it. Alchemy is guilty of having waylaid generations of scholars.

Only within the framework of the tradition of the Aristotelian *falsafa* and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the Muslim East outlined in the first chapter, and with an awareness of the particular historical and cultural epoch in which 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī operated is it now possible to study his metaphysical work the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*, and to understand its importance both from an exegetical and doctrinal and from a historiographical point of view.

³⁴⁴ Zand-Videan-Videan (1965), 272.9–276.12, 273–277.

³⁴⁵ Joosse (2011), 27–43, states that 'Abd al-Laṭīf was not a practicing or court physician, but he was a medical theorist, well read in humoral medicine, who achieved a wide understanding of medical theory. 'Abd al-Laṭīf had a strong preference for the universals of medicine: teaching and learning. The particular or individual side of medicine, concrete patients and their diseases, played a subordinate part and merely served a theoretical purpose.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BOOK ON THE SCIENCE OF METAPHYSICS BY 'ABD AL-LAṬĪF AL-BAĠDĀDĪ

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the *falsafa* was established between the eighth and the ninth century thanks to the work of translating and re-thinking Greek philosophy undertaken by a circle of intellectuals, most of them linked to al-Kindī. He presented a metaphysical project aimed at justifying a doctrine of the First Principle which is compatible with the cornerstones of the Koranic doctrine of the oneness of a creator and provident God, thus selectively assimilating Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and ensuring the centrality of books *Alpha Elatton* and *Lambda*, in which the doctrine of the impossibility of an infinite regress in a causal series ends with the description of the First Cause, prior to every other cause and the cause of all that which follows it. This reading, which we could define with our historiographical awareness as "theologizing", imposed itself: Aristotelian and Neoplatonic theology concurred in describing the First Principle, even renouncing some of their own specific characteristics.

Only in the tenth century, at the moment of the definitive justification and assimilation of the Greek tradition and in the wider context of a system which also was able to include the Islamic sciences, did al-Fārābī make himself the promoter of a metaphysical science constituted by the study of being *qua* being and its principles, culminating in natural theology. In this way al-Fārābī was able to explain Aristotle's text on the first philosophy in its entirety. Avicenna's training, as well, is a crucial testimony to this process.

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī also fits into the same movement of ideas. His *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* (*Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabā'a*) is an important document for understanding the metaphysical science after Avicenna in the Muslim East, and it is fundamental for evaluating the interpretation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the schools of what we call today the Near East between the twelfth and the thirteenth century. Indeed, as we will see, 'Abd al-Laṭīf's need to return to the "primitive" Aristotle resolved itself by returning to the Aristotle of the origins of the *falsafa*. For this reason, by studying the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*, it is possible to observe how the models of metaphysics put forwards by al-Kindī and al-Fārābī survived the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*.

In this chapter, therefore, after an initial section on the two manuscripts which have preserved ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s metaphysical work, in the second section I will present the coherence of the past models that the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* presents, both from the point of view of its use of sources and its exegesis, with respect to the original metaphysical project elaborated at the beginnings of the *falsafa* by al-Kindī in his *On First Philosophy*. Then in the third section I will show the structural correspondence of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s work with the fundamental sub-divisions of metaphysical science introduced by al-Fārābī in his *Enumeration of the Sciences*.

Finally, I will devote the fourth section to the conclusions: over the course of little more than four centuries, from the middle of the eighth to the beginning of the thirteenth century a metaphysical discipline was established in the Muslim East which, as a synthesis of the metaphysical doctrines of Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, Plotinus, Proclus, al-Kindī and al-Fārābī, received its ultimate form. In this perspective the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* is not only a witness to the indirect tradition of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, but presents itself rather as a school textbook whose object is no longer a text handed down from the past, the *Metaphysics*, but a discipline. This, I believe, is the peculiarity which distinguishes the history of the science of metaphysics after Avicenna in Muslim East from the developments of *falsafa* in al-Andalus, dominated by the figure of Averroes and his long commentaries, which imposed a return to the study of Aristotle’s works in Arabic translation and the doctrinal commentary placed between the lemmata of the text.

The Aristotle of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s is, as we have seen, a “virtual Aristotle”, created by *falsafa* in the course of five centuries of development. It is the Aristotle whose *Peripatos* ‘Abd al-Laṭīf believed he had seen in the remains of the red granite columns appearing out of the sea on the beach of Alexandria:

I saw at Alexandria the Column of the Pillars called *‘Amūd al-Sawārī*. It is of that red spotted granite which is so extremely hard. This column is of surprising dimensions and height. I can readily give credit to its being 70 cubits high: it is 5 cubits in diameter, and stands on a base very large and proportioned to its height. On the summit of this column is a large capital which would have been placed with the nicest precision, as it must have required a profound knowledge of mechanics and the art of raising great weights, together with surprising skill in practical geometry. A person worthy of belief assured me that having measured the circumference of this column he found it to be 75 spans of great measure.

I likewise saw on the shore where the sea approaches the walls of the town, more than 400 columns broken into two or three parts. The stone of

them was similar to that of the Column of the Pillars and apparently of from a third to a fourth part of its size. All the inhabitants of Alexandria claimed that these columns once stood around the Column of the Pillars, but that a Governor of Alexandria of the name of Qarāġā, who held command in this city under Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb (Saladin), thought proper to throw them down, break them in pieces, and cast them on the beach, under pretence of checking the force of the waves and securing the walls of the city against their violence, and at the same time to prevent the shipping of any enemy from anchoring under the wall. It was the action of an untaught child or of a man incapable of distinguishing right from wrong.

Round the Column of the Pillars I likewise saw some considerable remains of these columns, part of them entire, and others broken. It was still evident from these remains that the columns were once covered with a roof which they supported. Above the Column of the Pillars is a cupola which it supports. I presume this was the portico in which Aristotle taught, and after him his followers, and that this also was the academy (*dār al-'ilm*) erected by Alexander (the Great) when he built this city, and in which was placed the library (*ḥizānat al-kutub*) consigned to the flames with the permission of Caliph 'Umar, may God bless him, by 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ.¹

This passage is extremely significant: it is paradigmatic of the distance that now separates the *falāsifa* and the intellectuals of the twelfth and the thirteenth century from their Greek philosophical sources and, at the same time, of their intent to reconnect themselves to this tradition. From this perspective 'Abd al-Laṭīf's metaphysical science should be analyzed.

1. *The Manuscripts*

The *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* is preserved in two manuscripts:² Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 16–178;³ and Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 140v–187v.

The ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, was made known by Paul Kraus in his *Plotin chez les Arabes*.⁴ It was copied in the month of *Muḥarram* in 936, that is to say, between the months of September and October, 1529, in Egypt, by the physician Šaraf al-Dīn Mūsā ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mutaṭabbib al-Šāfi'ī.⁵

¹ Zand-Videan-Videan (1965), 128.13–132.6, 129–133.

² I am quoting from the photographic reproductions of the two mss.

³ For easy reference I employ the pagination of this ms. as given in the reproduction that I am using and which is reproduced also by Neuwirth (1976).

⁴ Kraus (1940–41), 263–295 and in particular 279 ff.

⁵ Šaraf al-Dīn Mūsā ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mutaṭabbib al-Šāfi'ī, author of a medical work the *Kūtāb al-Nukat al-wafīyāt fi aḥkām al-ḥummayāt*, whose autograph is preserved in the Garrett collection in Princeton. Cf. Brockelmann (1938), suppl. II, 1031 (n. 44); Hitti-Faris-Abdalmalik (1938), n. 1115.

The manuscript contains 266 folios with a written space of around 25–27 lines each. Each line usually contains 14 words. The last five folios are blank. It contains no marginal notation. It is written in the *Nashī* script; the letters of the titles are elongated and written in red ink.

The diacritical dots are continually inserted, but are often misleading. *Madda*, *waṣla*, and *tašdīd* on the other hand are missing. The vocalization is not added and the *i'rāb* is not indicated either. The rules of writing the *hamza* are observed in an unusually strict fashion: the *hamza* is always inserted at the beginning and the end of a word. It is not inserted into the body of a word on the other hand if it is vocalized with the vowel *i*: in this case the *hamza* is substituted by the two diacritical dots of the letter *ya*'.

Besides the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī (pp. 16–178), the manuscript contains various philosophical treatises: the *Letter on the Divine Science* (*Risāla fī l-'Ilm al-ilāhī*), paraphrases of several passages from Plotinus' *Enneads* V, wrongly attributed to al-Fārābī (pp. 2–15),⁶ a *Book on the Metaphysics from Averroes' Short Commentaries* (*Kitāb Mā ba'd al-ṭab'ā min talḥīsāt[...]* *Ibn Ruṣd*) (pp. 182–251),⁷ and finally a fragment on the eternity of the world taken from a Jewish philosophical work by Jehudah ben Salomon ibn Matqa Hakkōhēn.⁸

The manuscript İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279 was discovered by Franz Rosenthal in 1952.⁹ It was written in the month of *Ġumāda II* in the year 882, that is to say between the months of September and October in the year 1477, probably in Ṣa'da in Yemen. The scribe, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Mu'taq Yahyā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Mu'taq ibn Fahd ibn Ḥatraṣ ibn 'Amīr ibn Zunayḥ al-Nihmī,¹⁰ must have kept the manuscript with him up until 1480, as shown by a marginal note on fol. 173v.

⁶ Kraus (1940–41), 280–295.

⁷ Cf. Brockelmann (1937), suppl. I, 836.

⁸ Cf. Steinschneider (1893) (repr. Akademische Druck u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz 1956).

⁹ Rosenthal (1955a), 14–23.

¹⁰ Rosenthal (1955a), 14–16, presents some biographical information on the scribe and gives an intellectual profile of him: there emerges from the contents of manuscript *Carullah* 1279 the fact that the scribe wrote it for himself, considering it to be a collection of what he held to be of greatest value from the literary and philosophical field of his time. His main interests are in mystical and philosophical works and the occult sciences. He also seems to go beyond all religious barriers: he insists on the catholic nature of his choices, copies works by Arab and Muslim writers, Jews – the Jewish community was at that time particularly numerous in Yemen – and Arab Christians, and states that he is also willing to quote the opinion of heretics, since a comparison with different opinions may be useful. Cf. Pines (1961), 21–54, where there is an argument in favour of the possible Jewish origin of our scribe.

It is a miscellaneous manuscript of 410 folios, with a written space of 35–38 lines each. Sometimes the distance between one line and another is so small that the lines touch. Each line contains around 20 words. The manuscript, damaged on the front, can only be properly read from fol. 128v onwards.

Besides the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* it contains numerous works among which various treatises on metaphysics, by Alexander of Aphrodisias, Avicenna, Maimonides, and other Arabic and Jewish writers.¹¹ The quality of the text of the various treatises contained in it changes greatly from one work to another according to the quality of the manuscript from which they were copied in turn. The manuscript is full of marginal notes.

It is copied in very tight *Nashī* script. The diacritical signs are often missing in the *tā' marbūta* as well as in the prepositional *bi-*, the conjunction *fa-*, and the prefixes of the imperfect. *Madda*, *tašdīd*, and *sukūn* are rarely added. The *i'rāb* is rarely indicated. The writing of the *hamza* follows the rules used in middle Arabic.¹² The relative pronouns and adjectival attributes often do not agree in gender and/or number with the word to which they refer. Instead of the dual forms the plural is sometimes used, as was customary in middle Arabic.

As far as the marginal notes to our *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* are concerned, the lower and outer margins of fols 166v–168r and 171v–172r contain a marginal text in al-Nihmī's hand: they are the scribe's notes to *fūṣul* 13 and 16, preserved here and there in the form of lemmata and explanations (see for example fol. 172r). This marginal text is partly ruined on fols 168r, 168v, 169r, 171v, 172r, and 172v because of damage to the manuscript on the upper margin. The notes indicated with the sign § (*Ṣaḥḥa*) are the result of the collation of the *Carullah* manuscript with the exemplar from which it was copied.¹³ More problematic are the notes indicated as *nusha*.¹⁴

¹¹ Cf. Rosenthal (1955a), 16–21.

¹² Cf. Neuwirth (1976), 5; Blau (1961), 27–34, 81; Blau (1966–67), 87, 176–180.

¹³ This is the opinion of Gutas (1980), 217. Neuwirth (1976), 7, however, is of a different opinion maintaining that the notes indicated by the sign § (*Ṣaḥḥa*) indicate more probably a manuscript the scribe was convinced was close to the autograph.

¹⁴ As regards all further indications concerning the relationship between the copies of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* preserved in manuscript *Carullah* and in the Cairo manuscript, their exemplars, the copies they were collated against, and the stemma, see the introductory pages of Neuwirth (1976), 8–10, and the critical review of this study in Gutas (1980), 217–218. Cf. Genequand (1978), 362–364; Butterworth (1980), 198–199.

At the beginning of the *muqaddima* (introduction) to our text, the scribe gives us some important information, which we will analyze in the next sections. Al-Nihmī in fact quotes what the scribe of the copy at his disposal says regarding his own exemplar. The scribe in question says that one or more folios have gone missing from the beginning of the work, and states that to fill this lacuna he wants to introduce a passage taken from one of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s works in which ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī himself refers to the contents of al-Fārābī’s treatise *The Aims of the Metaphysics*.¹⁵

The copyist says the following concerning the copy from which this copy was transcribed: “I have transcribed this copy from a copy whose beginning lacked something from the introduction and my knowledge lacks one folio or more; I wished to call to mind a passage from the work by the author, the master ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf already mentioned – may God have mercy on him and reward him with goods – which indicates and lets us know what is missing from the copy and perhaps even that which is missing from the discourse which he has placed as an introduction to this book of his will be found and come to light. This passage belongs to the master, the philosopher, the magnificent Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī – may God have mercy on him and reward him with goods. This situation must be known regarding this book – may God help it. This is his discourse: *Book of Metaphysics* in the name of God the merciful and compassionate may the help of God be upon it (ms. *Carullah* 1279, fol. 140r29).

Then we read in the *muqaddima*:

The writer, the master ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf – God have mercy on him – says: “My intention is a *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* which will be an intermediary between the simple and the specific, because I have already written a book on this a long time ago which was lengthy and I had repeated the contents in it with a long explanation which was on the point of boring the reader”.¹⁶ Then he recounts that what had induced him to write this book is the fact that he had considered that Ibn Sinā had written works against the doctrine of the Peripatetics and he wished to put the master’s pupils on their guard so that they would not become accustomed to his (Ibn Sinā’s) works.¹⁷ Then after this he recounts that he wanted to begin by an

¹⁵ Cf. above Chapter I, note 334.

¹⁶ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī says he wishes to write a treatise of average length, unlike a previous work he had written on metaphysics which was lengthy and detailed, so as not to bore the reader. It is natural, therefore, to expect our text to contain some abbreviated parts not always easy to understand: cf. Neuwirth (1976), 178, Gutas (1980), 215.

¹⁷ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī says that he was induced to write this treatise on metaphysics by the desire to put students on their guard against Avicenna’s works on metaphysics, which opposed the doctrines of the Peripatetics, that is to say, the doctrines of Aristotle,

introduction in which he described the aim of the book and its utility and the division of its parts. And he says that the best which is known on this subject is the *maqāla* by Abū Naṣr in which he deals with all these points and that "I want to copy them literally". Abū Naṣr says: "The *Book of Metaphysics* contains twelve books: the first is called little Alif and it recounts in it the demonstration of the First Causes of being, then the greater Alif, and then there is the book called *Bā'* and it contains an account of the difficult *aporiai* and their solution, and, finally, the rest in the order *Alif*; *Bā'*, *Ġīm* (etc.)". The scribe says: "I will narrate it to you so that you know from this the aim of the introduction to the book and will reflect on it so that perhaps, if one day you find yourself facing Abū Naṣr's discourse, you too will be able to copy it at the beginning of this copy; in truth Abū Naṣr's discourse is not complete and the rest is missing up to the eighth book excluded; moreover, a passage in one place has been erased, which does not explain anything, and we have not copied it in this book and the end of the book is not interesting; know this". Hence what we find in the original copy is the eighth book on potency and act and on the priority of the first of the two; the ninth book on the one, the many, and the other, on difference, and on contrary; the tenth book on the distinction of that which is between the principles of this science and its accidents, the eleventh book on the principle of substance, all that which is, and the demonstration of its essence – that is, the Highest who is in fact the science of essence, the truth of essence – and on the separate beings which follow him and on the modality of the order of beings with respect to the Highest, the twelfth book on natural principles and the principles of mathematics. This is the explanation of the aim of this book and its parts.¹⁸ Let us content ourselves with what we have taken from Abū Naṣr's discourse on the account of the eighth book, which is normally placed before the other books. *On the other hand, however, let us say that this science consists of three large parts. One examines beings and the accidents of beings qua beings. Another examines the principles of demonstrations in the particular sciences and then examines the principles of the science of logic, the science of mathematics, and natural science; it corrects them, explains their substance, and lists the erroneous opinions into which the Ancients fell regarding the principles of these sciences: how, for example, it was believed that the point, unity, lines, and surfaces were separate substances. Finally the part that follows*

Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, and al-Fārābī (cf. above Chapter II, 179). Gutas (1980), 215, stresses that 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-BaĠdādī's treatise must be analyzed, first of all, as an account of what 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-BaĠdādī considers the Peripatetic metaphysical science really to be, with respect to Avicenna's metaphysics. I believe, for these reasons, that this initial work of excavating the sources and the structure of the treatise undertaken here must be followed by a detailed comparison between the wording of this treatise and that of the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*. On 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-BaĠdādī's criticisms of Avicenna's philosophy cf. above Chapter II, 180–190.

¹⁸ The bold text is a rather literal quotation of a passage taken from al-Fārābī's *Maqāla fī Agrāḍ al-Ḥakīm fī kull maqāla min al-kitāb al-mawsūm bi-l-Ḥurūf* (cf. above Chapter I, note 337; Al-Fārābī, *Fī agrāḍ al-Ḥakīm fī kull maqāla min al-kitāb al-mawsūm bi-l-Ḥurūf*, 36.20–38 Dieterici).

*examines beings that are not bodies and are not in bodies and explains that they are multiple beings, finite in number, different in their degrees of perfection, and that they arrive progressively in their degrees of perfection to the First Principle which is the most perfect among them; it also explains that their perfections are derived from the First Principle. The First Principle, instead, does not derive its being or its perfection from anything other than itself, everything that follows it is subsequent to it in being and perfection, and it is that which communicates to each being its being and to each individual thing its unity and to all that which has truth its truth. It is the unity worthiest of the name one and being with respect to all that which follows it and it is stable in all that which distinguishes it. It is then explained how beings are emanated from it, the direction of their progression and the fact that each of them is ordered in the position which it is due without being either diminished or overvalued. It is also clarified what the link between beings is like, their connection, and in what they are linked. Next, it is clarified that the First Principle – may he be glorified – is not unjust in its actions, does not make mistakes, does not feel aversion, does not despise order and is not merely a lack of something having composition. The First Principle – praise be to Him – is that which perfects any being which deserves it without conceding to it more than its due. Finally, this work clarifies what kind of solicitude it has with respect to its universe, how evil comes about in a part of it, what the true essence of evil is, and what it is generated from. The First Principle is the source of all good. Then those corrupt opinions are destroyed which speak of God the Highest and his actions because of that which leads to their confutation and concerning this it is also clarified how (this happens).¹⁹ All of this takes place by demonstration and becomes manifest without any opinions related to the former remaining. It is not possible to abstain from them and neither is it necessary to doubt them. The chapters of the book then follow, twenty-four in number (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 140v 2–31; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 16.1–17.17).*

It must also be remembered that only a small part of this important treatise on metaphysics has been edited, namely the part of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s treatise regarding the first two books of the *Metaphysics* (*faṣl* 1), the compendium of book Λ of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (*fuṣūl* 13–16), the summary of the *Liber de causis* (*faṣl* 20), and the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* (*fuṣūl* 21–24).²⁰

¹⁹ The text in italics is a faithful paraphrase of the passage analyzed in Chapter I (cf. above, Chapter I, 72–74) on the description and tripartition of metaphysics presented by al-Fārābī in his *Enumeration of the Sciences* (Al-Farabi, *Catálogo de las ciencias*, 87.10–90 Gonzalez Palencia).

²⁰ Neuwirth (1976); Neuwirth (1977–78), 84–100; Badawī (1955a), 248–256 (*Liber de causis*). There is an English translation of this compendium of the *Liber de causis* in Taylor (1984), 286–323; Badawī, (1955), 199–240 (pseudo-*Theology*).

2. *The Greek and Arabic Sources of the Book on the Science of Metaphysics and their Use: 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's Return to al-Kindī's Metaphysical Project*

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* is a privileged vantage point from which to observe which works on metaphysics were received and assimilated in the formative period of *falsafa*, imposed themselves and circulated in learned circles to the point of becoming canonical. In the twenty-four chapters (*fuṣūl*) which make up this treatise, the author in fact uses, paraphrases and summarizes a sort of "library" of treatises on metaphysics: Aristotle's *Metaphysics* completed with some Greek exegesis, such as Themistius' paraphrase and Alexander of Aphrodisias' *Fī mabādī' al-kull*, his *De Providentia* and some of his *Quaestiones*, the *Liber de causis*, several propositions from Proclus' *Elements of Theology* and parts of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*.

2.1. *The Metaphysics, the Paraphrase of Lambda by Themistius, and the Fī mabādī' al-kull by Alexander of Aphrodisias*

As we have seen in the first chapter,²¹ Aristotle's *Metaphysics* had been received selectively from its first translation into Arabic in the context of the circle of al-Kindī. Uṣṭāṭ in fact translated the books *Alpha Elatton*, *Beta*, *Gamma*, *Delta*, *Epsilon*, *Zeta*, *Heta*, *Theta*, *Iota*, and *Lambda*, as shown by the Leiden manuscript, the only one to preserve Averroes' *Tafsīr Mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, Uṣṭāṭ's translation must have also included books *M* and *N*, which are lost to us. Uṣṭāṭ's translation of book *Alpha Meizon* on the other hand has not been preserved. Finally, book *Kappa* never seems to have been translated into Arabic. In the case of *Alpha Meizon*, the fact that Uṣṭāṭ's translation has not been preserved is perhaps explained, as we have already said,²² by coherence with the Neoplatonic interpretation of al-Kindī's circle. The dialectic comparison presented in this book between pre-Socratic and Platonic ontology on one hand, and Aristotelian ontology on the other, confuted the unity of metaphysical knowledge of the Greek tradition in the first place, and in the second place it disturbed the reciprocal congruence between Greek metaphysics and *tawhīd*. It is plausible that these were the reasons why book *Alpha Meizon*, just like books *M* and *N* which partly reflect the same dialectical comparison between Aristotelian metaphysics and Platonic

²¹ Cf. above Chapter I, 36–45.

²² Cf. above Chapter I, 40–41.

dialectics, did not circulate enough to ensure their survival within the corpus produced in the circle of al-Kindī. Al-Kindī himself seems to have used books *Alpha Meizon*, *M* and *N* only indirectly.

In the context of this unitary vision of Greek metaphysics, the first Arabic interpreters of Aristotle, al-Kindī and Ṭābit ibn Qurra, centred on the contents of books *Alpha Elatton*, *Epsilon*, and *Lambda*. In their reading the search for truth was understood both as a search for the causes of being, as Aristotle promised at the beginning of the *Metaphysics* (*Metaph. a 1*, 993a 30–b 30), and as an investigation of the supersensible substance which is first (*Metaph. E 1*, 1026a 10–23). They found in book *Lambda* the solution for their analysis of Aristotle's philosophy. In this book, in fact, after stressing that the proper object of metaphysics is the search for the causes of substance and after distinguishing the sensible substance, be it eternal, or corruptible, from the separate substance (*Metaph. Λ 1* 1069a 30–b2), Aristotle, from chapter 6 onwards, tackles the argument which deduces from the eternity of circular movement the existence of an immaterial substance eternally in act, which is its cause (*Metaph. Λ 6*, 1071b 3–22). This substance moves without itself moving, and its causality is that of a goal. This substance, the most perfect model of motionless action (*Metaph. Λ 6*, 1072a 10), was at the same time depicted as the highest term on the axiological scale, the architectural principle of everything, living an eternally blessed and purely intellective, simple, and immaterial life. In addition, the causality of this First Principle was assimilated to that of the Neoplatonic One due to an analysis of the meanings of "one" presented by Aristotle in book *Delta*. In his *On First Philosophy*, al-Kindī moves from "one" intended as a numeric principle or the first measure in a given set, indivisible by quantity and species (*Metaph. Δ 6*, 1015b 15–1017a6), to "one" as non-multiplicity, that is to say, unity (*tawḥīd*), transcending any predication.

The great interest aroused by Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and in particular *Lambda*, his theological book *par excellence*, was followed by the need, well demonstrated by the Treatise of Ṭābit ibn Qurra on the *Concise Exposition of What Aristotle Presented in His Book of Metaphysics*, to re-read the contents of the work in accord with the exegesis of the Greek tradition that this text had received. Out of all of them, the work which imposed itself from the very beginning of the reception of Aristotle's work on first philosophy was the paraphrase by Themistius²³ and the exegesis

²³ Brague (1999), 24–33, indicates the places where more or less explicit mention is made of Themistius' paraphrase in the *Book of the Search* (*Kitāb al-Baḥṭ*) attributed to

presented in Alexander of Aphrodisias' work *On the Principles of the Universe* (*Fī mabādī' al-kull*).²⁴

As we have seen above, in the sources there is a certain discordance regarding the attribution of the Arabic translation of Themistius' paraphrase of book *Lambda*.²⁵ In the *Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm says that Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus translated book *Lām*, furnished with Themistius' paraphrase,²⁶ but in a manuscript of the Hebrew translation by Samuel ben Tibbon, which has come down to us,²⁷ and in manuscript Damascus, *Zāhirīyya* 4871, which preserves the beginning of the integral Arabic version of the first chapter and the opening lines of the second, it is stated that it was Ishāq who translated Themistius' paraphrase, while Tābit corrected it. In reality Themistius' paraphrase has reached us in two different redactions: an integral translation and a paraphrase. The beginning of the integral text is conserved in the Arabic manuscript mentioned above and it has been edited in Badawī (1947).²⁸ The abbreviated version, probably that translated by Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus, is preserved in manuscript Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya *Ḥikma* 6, and this too has been edited in Badawī (1947).²⁹

The crucial theories that the Arabic authors derived from this exegesis of book *Lambda* are those of God's knowledge of inferior realities and of the view of God as Law of the world. If in Aristotle the First Principle, who only thinks of itself (*Metaph.* Λ 9, 1074b 33–1075a 10), does not know the world, in Themistius, God, understood as Plotinus' νοῦς (*Enn.* IV 4[28], 2, 11), contains within itself the ideas of all things and hence knows all that which is knowable. Themistius therefore describes the relationship between God and the world by saying that God is the law and the order of

Ġābir ibn Ḥayyān, the treatise *On the Intentions of the Metaphysics* (*Maqāla fī Aġrād al-Ḥakīm fī kull maqāla min al-kitāb al-mawsūm bi-l-Ḥurūf*) by al-Fārābī, the *Book of the Warning and the Revision* (*Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l-iṣrāf*) by the historian al-Mas'ūdī, the treatise *Happiness and Making Happy* (*Al-Sa'āda wa-l-iṣ'ād*) by al-Āmīrī, the *Ilāhiyyāt* of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'* and his *Kitāb al-Inṣāf*, the *Book of Religions and Sects* (*Kitāb al-Milal wa-l-niḥal*) by al-Šahrastānī, and, finally, in Averroes' *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics* (*Tafsīr Mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*).

²⁴ Cf. above Chapter I, note 281.

²⁵ Cf. above Chapter I, note 215.

²⁶ Cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 251.25–30 Flügel; 312.11–20 Tağaddud.

²⁷ Ms. B quoted in Themistii *In Aristotelis Metaphysicorum librum Λ paraphrasis hebraice et latine*, edidit S. Landauer, CAG V.5, introduction, V; cf. also Frank (1958–59), 215, n. 2; Peters (1968a), 52.

²⁸ Badawī (1947), 329–333.

²⁹ Badawī (1947), 12–21. Cf. also Pines (1987), 177 for the possibility that the double Arabic redaction depends on a double redaction in the tradition.

the world, the condition of intelligibility (*Enn.* V 9[5], 5, 28). These two doctrines of Themistius were adopted to superimpose onto Aristotle's doctrine of the First Principle two essential attributes of the Koranic God, providence and justice.³⁰

The *Fī mabādi' al-kull* (*On the Principles of the Universe*) attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias, lost in Greek and preserved in Arabic, has many points of contact with Themistius' paraphrase. It is also a very free paraphrase of *Lambda*, which deals with the theme of the $\pi\rho\nu\omicron\nu\iota\alpha$ of the First Principle for the preservation and the order of the cosmos and which contains long digressions. The tradition of this text is particularly complicated: in fact it presents problems of unity, authenticity,³¹ provenance, and transmission.

A sixth-century Syriac paraphrase of this treatise is extant: its author is the Monophysite physician and philosopher Sergius of Rēš'ainā,³² who was educated in Alexandria. There are also two Arabic versions of the Greek original, both probably translated from a Syriac intermediary and an Arabic epitome.³³ The two Arabic versions are both entitled *A Writing by Alexander of Aphrodisias on the Principles of the Whole According to the Opinion of Aristotle* (*Maqālat al-Iskandar al-Afrūdīsī fī mabādi' al-kull 'alā ḥasab ra'y Aristātālis*).³⁴ The first of these is ascribed in the mss. to various translators: many mss. ascribed it to Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn, one of the manuscripts to Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (but with the term *istihraj*, instead of *tarjama* or *naql*, which might indicate some editorial task rather than mere translation), and one to Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd Allāh, who translated from the Syriac version by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq. According to Genequand "there is nothing inherently improbable about any of these ascriptions, nor is it possible on purely linguistic grounds to decide in favour of one of the putative authors

³⁰ Cf. the influence of this theory by Themistius in the ninth (above, Chapter I, 65) and the sixth section (above, chapter I, 62) respectively of the *Treatise by Tābit ibn Qurra on the Concise Exposition of what Aristotle presented in his Book of Metaphysics*.

³¹ The attribution of this treatise to Alexander of Aphrodisias has been cast into doubt by Pines (1986a), 252–255 and by Gutas (1988), 215–221.

³² Cf. Hugonnard-Roche (1997b), 126; Endress (2002), 43; Furlani (1923), 1–22; Miller (1994); Fiori (2010), 127–58.

³³ According to Endress (1997), 16–17: "à la base des versions diverses il y avait un texte authentique d'Alexandre sur la nature et la cause du mouvement céleste, et sur le Premier Moteur immobile et éternel (...) à ce noyau ancien fut ajouté un deuxième texte d'inspiration néoplatonicienne sur la Cause Première en tant qu'intelligence divine".

³⁴ *Maqālat al-Iskandar al-Afrūdīsī fī mabādi' al-kull 'alā ḥasab ra'y Aristātālis al-faylasūf* in Badawī (1947), 253–277; in Genequand (2001). Cf. the translations into the following European languages: the French version in Badawī (1968), 121–139; partial German version in Rosenthal (1965), 146–149; two partial translations into English in Rosenthal (1975), 146–149 and in Gutas (1988), 215–217.

rather than the other".³⁵ The mention of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq might be due to confusion with his son or to the fact that he is the author of the translation from Greek into Syriac. Concerning Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd Allāh and Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn, it is possible to suppose that the work of the little-known Ibrāhīm was ascribed to the well-known Ishāq, or – as suggested by Genequand – that we have “two distinct versions, one being a revision of the other, or personal copies, or editions or Bearbeitungen, of a translation produced in collaboration by two or more translators”.³⁶ The second Arabic version is attributed to Abū 'Uṭmān al-Dimašqī, the translator of several of Alexander's *Quaestiones* and a contemporary of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq. The two versions are very similar and the first may be a revision of the second.

The Arabic epitome, on the other hand, entitled *On the First Cause and the Caused and on Its Movements and Their Differences, and the Movement of That Which is Subject to Corruption and Generation* (*Risālat al-Iskandar al-Afrūdīsī fī l-'illa al-ūlā wa-l-ma'lūl wa-ḥarakāti-hi wa-ḥitilāfi-hā wa-ḥarakāt mā yaḥsud wa-yakūn*), seems, for reasons of terminology and style, to date back to that set of Arabic translations, mainly of metaphysics and cosmology, carried out in the context of the circle of translators formed around al-Kindī.³⁷

The first *falāsifa* found in this treatise a synthesis of the principal doctrines of book *Lambda*, that is, Alexander's doctrines of the identification of the First Mover with the supreme intelligible, the doctrine of divine knowledge of particulars and of the *πρόνοια* of the First Principle. The First Principle, because of its perfection – it is in fact the supreme intelligible – although it does not think of particular and inferior things, still knows them by knowing the consequences of the eternal movement of the First Mover.³⁸

In his *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* (*Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*), 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī devotes a full sixteen out of twenty-four chapters to a presentation and discussion of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which he probably knew in more than one translation,³⁹ and which was integrated by the exegesis of *Lambda* in Themistius' paraphrase and that presented in the *Fī mabādī' al-kull*. The books of the *Metaphysics* he freely paraphrases are, in order, *Alpha Elatton/Alpha Meizon*, *Beta*, *Delta*, *Gamma*, *Epsilon*, *Zeta*, *Heta*, *Theta*, *Iota*, and *Lambda*. Three whole chapters (13–15) are

³⁵ Genequand (2001), 32.

³⁶ Genequand (2001), 31–32; 35–39.

³⁷ See the edition and study in Endress (2002), 19–74; cf. Endress (1997), 43–76.

³⁸ Badawī (1947), 271.13–272.10.

³⁹ Cf. Neuwirth (1976), 168–169.

devoted to the latter one, which was strongly influenced by Themistius' paraphrase. The presentation of *Lambda* ends with an entire chapter (16) containing an epitome of the *Fī mabādi' al-kull*.

'Abd al-Laṭīf's use of the *Metaphysics* reflects that of its first Arabic interpreters, in particular al-Kindī, which centred on the contents of books *Alpha Elatton*, *Epsilon*, and *Lambda* and was tied to the criterion of the doctrinal unity of Greek metaphysics. This is particularly clear from the opening chapter of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*. Paradigmatically entitled *On the Preparation of the Soul for the Grasping of Truth and on the Fact That it is Not Possible for There to be Certain Knowledge of Anything if Not Through Its Causes and That, Therefore, Knowledge of the Causes is Necessary*, this chapter not only proves the centrality of book *Alpha Elatton*, considered the best introduction possible to any treatise dealing with metaphysics, but certifies the degree of awareness reached by 'Abd al-Laṭīf in his use of sources and the coherence of some of his doctrinal choices with the teaching of al-Kindī.

'Abd al-Laṭīf in fact creates this first chapter by placing *Alpha Meizon* within *Alpha Elatton*: the latter becomes a frame for the former whose first eight chapters and the beginning of the ninth are paraphrased (*Metaph. A*, 980a 21–990b 1). The doxography devoted to Aristotle's criticisms of Plato's doctrines of ideas and principles is merely mentioned, and in a certain way, as we will see, "integrated". What follows is a translation of the first chapter.

[993a30] *Truth is, on one hand, difficult and, on the other, simple.* As to its difficulty, this depends on its distance from our senses and our perceptions; as for its ease, this depends on our natural disposition to desire it and on the stimulus which comes to us from imitation and teaching.

The root of this desire is the ability, which we possess, in which an uncaused seed is placed: I mean the speculative premise. This seed is the cause of all human goods, past and present. This excellent seed, when it falls on pure earth and is cared for and provided with that which makes to sprout and grow in its substance, bears the fruit of knowledge of the truth and the ease of grasping it. The worst source of ruin for this seed and its earth are bad habits, perverse teaching, and corrupt opinions which are rooted in the soul and provoke anger and passion. The greatest benefit on the other hand, is the purifying of the soul from what corrupts it, accustoming it to things separated from matter, a love of the truth, avoidance of pleasure and the voracity of wolves.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Already from these first lines we have a measure of the distance which separates our author from his source and an idea of the centrality of the Neoplatonic doctrines of the human soul and, once purified, its ascent to the First Principles.

Zeal in the search for it (the truth) requires an effort not mixed with languor, as happens instead in he who is madly in love and infatuated with the thing (the object of his love). This immense effort is necessary precisely because [993b7–10] *the ease and the difficulty of this search depend on us and not on the thing itself; as happens to bats because of the weakness of their sight when they look at the sun's disk*. The cause of the difficulty of this search lies in the fact that it investigates things with which we have no familiarity and concepts separate from matter, which cannot be perceived by the senses. We already have sensible knowledge, that which is near to it, that which returns to it, and that which is born of it, but we need the support of God and divine providence.⁴¹

The first thing upon which a science is based is that [993b23] *the knowledge of truth can neither be obtained nor is possible without knowledge of the cause*. [993b24–26] In truth, of all the things that coincide in name, one exceeds the others in that which that name signifies, and it is the cause of existence in those remaining of the reality signified by that name, such as heat in fire and in iron, but in fire (heat) is stronger and original, and hence (fire) is the cause (of heat) in all the things which are hot and it is the truest of all the other things in that meaning.

And as to the things that have principles, [994a1–2] *the principles do not proceed infinitely towards any of the extremes*, and this is common to all the causes: the agent, the formal, and the final. [994a23–b1] It is possible that the things that are generated from one another as alteration proceed in a circle infinitely, such as water from air and air from water. Those things (on the other hand) which are generated perfectly do not return, such as the adult from the child, fruit from flower, and man from sperm: in fact, these things do not return.

[994a11–19] Everything which postulates the infinite does not have extremes, and that which does not have extremes does not have a middle. Sometimes we say that all things are middle and that the middles are caused and that, hence, there is no cause, but this is absurd. Thus, it is inevitable that things terminate back in a first (thing), which is the cause of all the others.

In this way it follows that the nature of the intellect is rendered vain, because science does not operate unless it is on account of an objective and an end at which it stops; definitions and demonstrations are equally rendered vain because the intellect will not have any principles with which to construct them.

And if the first (term) does not exist, then neither will the second, and when these two are taken away then science too will be taken away.

And in this way knowledge of all that which is infinite is impossible. [994b27–29] And if the species of causes are infinite in number, nothing is capable of science. [994b31–995a4] Habit and familiarity have great, firm strength. Now, things separate from matter, which we are now in search of,

⁴¹ The theme of divine providence is highlighted from the very first lines of the text.

belong to that which is not familiar. We must therefore get used to them and gradually make them familiar, because encountering the unexpected which is not familiar to us destroys the object and prevents us from reaching our goal.

[980a21] All men naturally desire knowledge, without any other aim but knowledge itself. [980a28] And in the same way they derive pleasure from sensations (in themselves) without wishing to derive any other advantage from them, [980a23] and especially from the two senses of hearing and sight. [980b28] With the repetition of the sensations experience is formed, which is the guarantee of knowledge. [981a15–18] Experience brings about knowledge in particular things and the arts enable knowledge in universal things, and actions and generations regard only particulars. It is best for art to be connected to experience and in this way wisdom becomes deeper and more solid.

[981b27–b13] He who knows the aim necessarily knows the cause of the action. Due to that science (*sc.* of the aim), man deserves to be called wise, and without it he becomes similar in his actions to the irrational animal. He who trusts in sensation does not know the cause: he judges that fire is hot, but he does not know why it is hot.

[981b13–982a2] Some arts were discovered because of their necessity, like agriculture and medicine; others, however, only because of their nobility, and these are more perfect in wisdom. Hence the purest of the sciences, which for this reason is called wisdom, is the science which investigates the principles of things and their First Causes.

[982a8–19] The first characteristic proper to the wise man is to know every thing it is possible for him to know and to be able to know difficult questions, which for others are obscure to understand: what he knows and explains is only for himself, and his wisdom is more perfect in wisdom and authority, and all other wisdom needs this wisdom, because this wisdom derives its principles from it, and is its handmaiden. [982a21–22] Every science whose object is more universal is more worthy of the name of wisdom.

[982b12–17] Men, therefore, also desire to philosophize. What first moved them was wonder with respect to simple things, then they progressed a little until they reached the aim: for example, they were first amazed by rain, lightening, thunder, the eclipse, and similar things, and whatever they adapted to be the cause of one of these (phenomena), they looked for it in that which is biggest, most noble, and most mysterious. And the search finishes by the principles of this science and wisdom will become perfect. And because of the strength of the pleasure which is born of understanding we find that he who philosophizes rejects the pleasures of the body and despises the affairs of this world, except in so far as they are necessary.

[982b24–27] And since this science is sought after for itself and not for something else, it is the only one of the sciences which is free [982b25–26] and the wise man of (all) men is (the only one) who is free, because he is not a slave of passion and his science is [983a5–10] the science of God alone. [982b28–983a4] It is in man's power to seek this knowledge, and it is in his

nature to reach it with the little light and the seed which he possesses (which is connatural to him), but not all are perfectly disposed; not all are free from impediments; God does not come to the aid of all and guide them on the right path and destine them for research. In most enterprises those who take that road are few, and still fewer than those who take the road are those who reach (their goal).⁴²

All research (was possible to the wise), but the most eminent research and the most important thing for them was the investigation of the principles of being. [983b6–7] The First Cause they grasped was matter and substrate, but few were they who discovered it in its true nature. Thales was the first to suppose that it (substrate) was water and he believed that it was wet and that what exists completes its being on account of wetness, such as the seed of plants, the sperm of animals, and all that which nourishes itself with what is wet. Others recognized this principle in the earth, because it is evident to sense; [984a5] still others designated the air, because, besides being wet, it is warm and thin enough to penetrate everywhere and the breath of life take place because of it. And this was an intuition of the agent cause which they had obscurely as if it were a dream. Better intuition was had by those who posited fire as the principle because of the potency of its action [984b5–8]. Greater understanding again was had by those who posited as principles two of these (elements), for example earth and water, so that one of the two is active and the other passive and so that the multiplicity of beings is produced from mixing them, even though it is unlikely for a single thing to form a multitude of things different from one another. [985b5–9] The situation is similar for those who established as principles vacuum and fullness, maintaining that fullness is being and vacuum not being: in fact, not being is not superior to being, if beings are produced from both. [985b10–12] This is similar to he who maintains that the principle is air and similar things, adding rarefaction and condensation, so that the being can come into being. But they understood best of all those [985a32] who established that there are four principles, namely the elements [985a3–7] and added to them love and victory (*ḡalaba*), love for union and victory for division. And all of them dreamed a dream of the agent and did not understand the foundation of the sciences, namely the form and the aim. And because of their ignorance of the form they assumed these principles according to a single state in their essences, incapable of change and alteration, but capable only of uniting and dividing and overcoming and winning.

And this is what they (did), they who posited parts, unity, the point, the line, and the surface. [989b29–32] But their condition is worse and much further from the truth, because they posited as principles things from which it is not possible for sensible natural bodies to be generated, with the exception that sometimes there generate from them imaginary mathematical bodies, when reason postulates the point which, by moving, generates the line which, by moving, generates the surface which, by moving, generates

⁴² Cf. the previous two notes.

the mathematical body. But all these are accidents and affections which are added to substance, but they are not substances. [990a34–b1] And so, he who posits the ideas which are known as the Platonic forms is like one who is dreaming of the form and the aim, just as who sleeps dreams. And all this research is only really on the principles of natural things, although they believe them to be general.

[993b11–14] They have our gratitude however for this introductory research, because it is exercise for our minds, it increases our desire, opens the doors of research to us, makes us aware of deviations and errors, guides our gaze to the goal, and by means of comparing opinions and (an evaluation) of what there is in each that is error and truth, it guides us to pure understanding and correct opinion.

Know that there is not only one discussion and it is not placed at a single level of nobility, obscurity and clarity, nor ease nor difficulty in comprehension. The principles of different things are not unique, but it is necessary for them to be different too, according to what they are principles of. The principles of geometry are not principles of arithmetic, nor principles of physics. The divine principle, then, is of another genus, which does not pertain to any of the principles. [995a13–16] Every science possesses (its own) tools for examination and a field of investigation which it cannot go beyond. And in the sciences and the arts the tools do not carry out their research according to a single method, but (different ones) according to their subjects; hence [995a15] the final and the agent cause are not sought in mathematics, but they are not neglected in physics, and demonstration does not investigate every things according to its true nature. Investigation according to a single method in all sciences is bad, proceeds incorrectly, and fails to meet its objective. [995a9–10] Moreover, learning and the search for demonstration are not in everyone's nature, and sometimes it is ignored and avoided: often someone does not use it even though his soul can find no peace without it.⁴³

In the second chapter,⁴⁴ entitled *On the Fact That Causes are Finite; If They Were Not Finite, the Science Which Aims at Knowing Them Would Be Impossible* (*Fī anna al-'ilal mutanāhiya wa law lam takun mutanāhiya lam yuta'alaq bi-hā 'ilm*) 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī first argues the impossibility of an actual infinite,⁴⁵ then, he introduces his paraphrase of *Metaphysics Beta*.⁴⁶ It is entitled "*On the Exposition of Aporiai, on the Reason for Their*

⁴³ The Arabic text has been edited by Neuwirth (1977–78), 97–100; I have however checked it against the two manuscripts described above, 183–187.

⁴⁴ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 141v–145r; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 21–33.

⁴⁵ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 141v28–142v8; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 21.8–23.24.

⁴⁶ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 142v8–145r15; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 23.24–33.

Obscurity and Ambiguity, and on the Methods for Their Solution (Fī dīkr masā'ila wa-ḡihati al-'awīši fī-hā wa-l-taškiki wa-l-išārati ilā ṭariqi ḥalli-hā)". Leaving aside the structure of this second chapter, on which I will come back later, here I want to focus on 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's idea of metaphysics as a science which emerges from this chapter. In the first *aporia* he wonders whether the examination of every kind of cause belongs to one science or to many.⁴⁷

The solution (*ḥall*) to this problem is that the object of a science (i) is the external being in which there is a principle of movement and of rest and this science searches for in it the four causes [...].

Another science (ii) is that whose objects are the measures and the figures which the intellect deprives from the adjacent matter and (this science) takes them separately and analyzes them with respect to what concerns them in relation to their essence. This science does not take as its own principles the final cause, the cause of movement, since its object is something that does not admit movement [...]. The mathematical sciences are of this kind.

Concerning the things separated (*muḡarrada*) from matter in their essence and by us, the four causes which belong to them are spiritual and they have a unique principle which gives a limit to the multiplicity of things which begin and spread out from it. This is a different class of science (iii) as is the science (iv) whose objects are universals, existing in the soul, but with respect to what these objects later undergo – the attribution, the position and the true and the false – this is another science: it is logic.

When the principles and the causes are different, it is necessary for the sciences to be different, too. But there is as the guide for all the sciences that science which every one science needs in the demonstration of its own principles. At the same time it is also the science that includes speculation on the First Principle, which every other thing needs in its own existence [...].

It has already been made clear that the final cause is the noblest cause, since everything that comes before the final cause is a result of it. The science of the final cause is the noblest of the sciences and the science of the absolute final cause, which is the final cause of the final causes, is the *ḥikma* which precedes every other knowledge.

So the sciences are many and every science has its own principle and premises [...]. It is not up to one particular science to investigate the being of its own principles, except the first science. If the principles are different, the sciences which investigate them are different: so for every science there is one object (Ms. Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, ff. 142v19–34; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 24.12–25.6).

⁴⁷ See the analysis of this first *aporia* proposed by Natali (2003), 43–74.

Despite the process of *diaporēisai* described in the prologue,⁴⁸ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf is boldly assertive in the exposition of the first *aporia*.

The solution requires that we distinguish the objects of four different sciences and for each one its own principles: the physical science studies the external being and examines in it the four causes (i); the mathematical sciences study their object without considering matter, the final cause, and the principle of movement (ii); the metaphysical science studies the immaterial things and their spiritual causes, and, as theology, the principle from which things originated (iii); and, finally, there is logic, which is the science whose objects are the universals in the soul (iv).

‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s explanation of the different *aḡnās al-‘ilal* is the same as that presented in Averroes’ *Tafsīr to Metaphysics Beta* 1, 995b4–996a17 where Averroes claims: “By kinds of causes (*aḡnās al-‘ilal*) Aristotle means the causes of different kinds as the principles of natural things (*awā’il al-umūr al-ṭabī’iyya*), of mathematical things (*awā’il al-umūr al-ta’ālīmiyya*) and of separate things (*awā’il al-umūr al-mufāriqa*).”⁴⁹

For ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, there are different causes for different kinds of being and different sciences for different causes, but there is one first science leading all the others, for two different reasons.

First, it is able to demonstrate the principles of the other sciences, because, as ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī says in the second *aporia*: “It is only this science, which investigates absolute beings and from them provides an explanation of the principles of the particular sciences; the particular sciences are comprised in it and are below it.”⁵⁰ And again in the third *aporia* he wonders whether this science, which has unified the principles of substance and the principles of demonstration, comes before the others, and he answers in the affirmative.⁵¹

Second, this science includes speculation about the First Principle, which every other thing needs in its own existence. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf claims that this First Principle is the absolute final cause and that the science of this cause is the *ḥikma* which precedes all other knowledge. In the second *aporia* he affirms that “the final cause produces the other causes and for

⁴⁸ See above 299–301.

⁴⁹ Averroes, *Tafsīr mā ba’d al-ṭabī’a* Bouyges, I, 175.8–10. French translation in Bauloye (2002), 196.

⁵⁰ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 143r6–7; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 25.16–17.

⁵¹ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 143r12–30; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 25.24–26.24.

this reason is the noblest, and the science of the final cause is the noblest of the sciences".⁵²

The analogy with some passage of Averroes' *Tafsīr* is striking. Averroes says: "The science which we call *ḥikma bi-itlāq* is the one which studies, among the causes, the final cause, the noblest of all beings, because all the causes are due to it, that is to say, because of it (*min qibal hādā al-sabab ay min aġli-hī*)".⁵³ For Averroes as for 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, *ḥikma* must be different from the particular sciences because it considers all beings and the final cause, the highest one: the final cause is in fact the cause of the causes and consequently the cause of all beings. Necessarily the study of the final cause is the task of *ḥikma*.

The absolute final cause is described by 'Abd al-Laṭīf in the forth *aporia* as *al-wuġūd al-muġarrad* (the Pure Being; which is a typical Avicennian phrase), the aim of everything, and the immobile mover, i.e., the First Principle whose knowledge is the end of our inquiry.⁵⁴ In the sixth *aporia* the First Principle is described as *al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq* (the True One) without any kind of multiplicity. The way to know this True One is to ascend from the things which have some degree of unity. So we say *one* army, *one* city, that Zayd is *one*, that the celestial sphere is *one*, and that the world is *one*. Then we proceed through souls and intellects, and through the things which in this ascent loose multiplicity and acquire unity until we reach the Absolute One (*al-wāḥid al-muṭlaq*).⁵⁵

I will return later to the function of the central books of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, paraphrased in chapters 3–11 of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*, in the next section, devoted to the structure of the compendium. What is interesting to stress here is how the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* puts forward the contents of *Lambda*, the exegesis of Themistius and that of Alexander, and reflects a model of metaphysical science which finds in the natural theology of *Lambda* the premise for a characterization of the First Principle, which is of clear Neoplatonic origin. We have already met this model in al-Kindī.

⁵² Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 143r1–2; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 25.10.

⁵³ Averroes, *Tafsīr mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* Bouyges, 190.4–6. French Translation in Bauloye (2002), *Averroès Grand Commentaire (Tafsīr) de la Métaphysique livre Beta* cit., pp. 209.

⁵⁴ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 143r30–143v3; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 26.24–27.9.

⁵⁵ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 143v29–35; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 28.20–29.3.

The thirteenth chapter of the *Kitāb fi 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* plays a crucial role: 'Abd al-Laṭīf summarizes the contents of *Lambda* 1–6, 6–10.⁵⁶ Not all the themes contained in it are treated at the same length: in particular the discussion of chapters 4–5 on the modes of being of principles, individually different but analogically identical, is practically absent, as is the astronomical excursus of chapter 8 (*Metaph.* Λ, 8 1073b 17–1074a 31). Indeed, the brief astronomical digression which ends the thirteenth chapter is unrelated to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and it presupposes the Ptolemaic system.

The first part of the chapter (the paraphrase of chapters 1–5 of *Lambda*) is faithful to Aristotle; 'Abd al-Laṭīf probably took as his model Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary in the Arabic translation by Abū Bišr Mattā.⁵⁷ In the second part, on the other hand, he makes great use of Themistius' paraphrase, quoting long passages from this work in Arabic which are otherwise only preserved in their Hebrew translation.⁵⁸

'Abd al-Laṭīf's exposition itself is influenced by the literary form of these two sources. In the first part, which is modelled on Alexander, he includes more literal quotations and faithful paraphrases from the *Metaphysics*,⁵⁹ while the second part is a step further removed from Aristotle's text and contains only a few brief quotations.

The exposition of the contents of *Lambda* presented in this chapter clearly presupposes a unitary reading of Greek metaphysics, coherent with the monotheistic theology of the Koran. 'Abd al-Laṭīf's use of Themistius' paraphrase in setting out *Lambda* 6–10 – in particular his use of Themistius' solutions to the problems of the divine knowledge of particulars and the relationship between the First Principle and the world – makes this exposition the doctrinal premise for the crystallization of the further developments of Neoplatonic origin.

Paradigmatic in this sense is the paraphrase of *Lambda* 7. Here 'Abd al-Laṭīf briefly summarizes the doctrine of *Lambda* 6 and introduces the notion of the immaterial substance, eternally in act, which moves without itself moving:

⁵⁶ For a calculation of the number of lines of text devoted to the paraphrase of each Chapter of *Lambda* and for a commentary on it see Neuwirth (1976), 163–164.

⁵⁷ Cf. Neuwirth (1976), 2–17, 164–166, 265–266, 268–269.

⁵⁸ Cf. Neuwirth (1976), 16–59, 164–166, 265–266, 268–269; cf. Brague (1999).

⁵⁹ This suggests that 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī had Alexander's commentary at his disposal, but it does not oblige us to admit it: there are other explanations as well. According to Neuwirth (1976), 268–269, there is no proof of the fact that our author had Alexander's commentary rather than a paraphrased version of Alexander's commentary, presenting a paraphrase of the commentary with quotations from Aristotle added here and there.

It has already been clarified that the First Mover is eternal and everlasting. It remains to be clarified that it is immobile. It emerges, indeed, that there is a substance that itself moves and that moves and a substance that moves without itself moving in any way. For this reason it is necessary to find a mover that does not move itself. This is not strange.⁶⁰

In this passage 'Abd al-Laṭīf affirms that it is necessary to demonstrate that the First Mover, which is eternal and everlasting, is also immobile. This is not strange if we consider the objects of desire, the intelligibles and the things which motivate our research without themselves moving in any way. The explanation of the movement produced by the First Mover as similar to an object of desire is not clearly stated, but it is introduced through the example of the objects of desire, the intelligibles and the things desirable in themselves. Then 'Abd al-Laṭīf clarifies the reasons for the First Mover's immobility:

There is nothing in it or outside it which forces it to move.⁶¹

In its essence there is no multiplicity. We do not say of it that it is one because one is a thing which does not pertain to its being in the same way that it pertains to "a man" or "a bee"; but because it is the being (*al-mawjūd*) and the one itself in which there is no plurality.⁶²

Nothing which is in the First Principle (some degree of potentiality) or outside it (a superordinate principle to it) forces it to move. It is absolutely simple, and absolutely free of multiplicity, because it is Supreme Being and One: it is One in the sense that the Neoplatonists gave to this term.

It is not only the mover of things, but it is also their perfection and their final cause. And it is in its essence both principle and perfection.⁶³

It is clear that 'Abd al-Laṭīf is using Themistius' paraphrase, of which the above-mentioned passage is a literal quotation.⁶⁴ The First Mover not only produces the movement of things, but it is perfection, namely the paradigmatic or formal cause and the final cause. It is the principle (from which movement starts) and the perfection (to which movement tends). The following passage, in which 'Abd al-Laṭīf introduces the example of the law, contains a part of Themistius' paraphrase which has not survived in the Arabic version edited by Badawī.

⁶⁰ Neuwirth (1976), 33.1–5.

⁶¹ Neuwirth (1976), 33.11–12.

⁶² Neuwirth (1976), 35.7–9.

⁶³ Neuwirth (1976), 35.10–11.

⁶⁴ Cf. the *Themistius arabus* in Badawī (1947), 15.15–16.

An example comes from the law. This moves politics in so far as it is chosen for itself, is good and is at the highest degree of excellence; still, the law is not a substance, but one of the effects of substance. And as regards the first object of desire and the First Mover, this is a substance which remains continually.⁶⁵

The law which ‘moves’ politics in so as far it is chosen in itself as the most excellent thing might be a good example of the First Mover, except that it is not a substance, while the First Mover is substance: this substance, as object of desire, moves; besides it remains continually: the only case in which a substance has such prerogatives is the case of God.

And God – may He be blessed – is the model of models, the law of laws, the cause for the being of worlds and their ordering and for their organization and for their beauty and for their duration. His substance is His science and from Him derives the order of beings and their organization. And we do not say that all beings tend to Him in one way only, but like the desire of soldiers towards their general, that of citizens towards the law. Each one moves according to his own degree and according to what is suited to him. So one cooks, the other finds the equipment for the battle. Therefore the degrees of the objects of desire are multiple: a part of them are due to a middle term, or middle terms, a part without a middle term. In this way we say that the movement of the animal, which is searching for food, is similar to the movement of a virtuous man, who is looking for excellence.⁶⁶

God is the cause for the being of worlds and the ordering for their beauty and for their duration. But not all beings tend to Him in one and the same way (the example is that of soldiers and citizens) because each being moves according to its own degree and according to what is suited to it. The degrees of the objects of desire are in fact multiple, with or without a middle term: the food which moves the animal is different from the excellence which moves the virtuous man.

The First Mover is therefore said to be one by essence, the architectural principle of everything and the supreme intelligible which makes the world be, preserves its existence, and orders it. One should not be surprised that, a little further on, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf characterizes Aristotle’s θεός as the God of the Koran, “who has no equals”.⁶⁷ The characteristics of the Neoplatonic One are thus grafted onto the Aristotelian characterization of the First Principle, faithfully reproduced by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī. The point of fusion lies in the doctrine of the self-reflection of divine thought,

⁶⁵ Neuwirth (1976), 37.1–4.

⁶⁶ Neuwirth (1976), 37.5–11.

⁶⁷ Neuwirth (1976), 39.7.

which for 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, who is influenced by the exegesis of Themistius, is not the reason for composition and multiplicity within the First Principle, as it was for Plotinus. If the thinking principle, the act of thinking and the object of thought coincide in the First Principle, which by now is called God, there is in Him no multiplicity.

He (the First Principle) thinks intelligibles, which are with Him, because they are Him and He is them [...]. He thinks of beings not as if they were external to Him or again as if they were effects alien to Him, but as He is the law. He possesses eternal life and the most perfect life, that of the intellect.⁶⁸

God thinks of beings not as if they were external to His nature, since it is He who makes them as they are and is their norm. For this reason the First Principle is life, being and pure good.⁶⁹ In his paraphrase of *Lambda* 9, 'Abd al-Laṭīf stresses that the First Principle thinks all the things together because they belong to His essence, as a shadow belongs to a person.⁷⁰ The First Cause is for 'Abd al-Laṭīf too, as for al-Kindī – who did not have Themistius' paraphrase, however - that cause which has within it all things in purely Neoplatonic vein.⁷¹ It is not surprising therefore that in paraphrasing *Lambda* 10 'Abd al-Laṭīf speaks of emanation from the First Principle.⁷²

There follows in the *Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* a chapter devoted to an account of the astronomical theory of *Lambda*⁷³ and another of scholastic flavour, which recapitulates and discusses several central concepts of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, such as that of movement, time, contraries, and end, for example.

⁶⁸ Neuwirth (1976), 41.4–5; 43.1–2.

⁶⁹ Neuwirth (1976), 43.5.

⁷⁰ Neuwirth (1976), 53.5.

⁷¹ Cf. D'Ancona (1998), 848 and note 46.

⁷² Neuwirth (1976), 57.6–8, 144.

⁷³ Genequand (1978), 363, observes that Neuwirth (1976), 146, uses the presence of a ninth sphere in the astronomical scheme presented by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī in this Chapter as an argument for establishing a *terminus post quem* for the writing of the *Lambda*-paraphrase, should 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī have simply reworked an older text. But Genequand (1978), 363, maintains that "This is not only unnecessary from her point of view, since she finally seems to accept 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī himself as paraphrast [Neuwirth (1976), 177], but is also based on the false premise that the ninth sphere was introduced into Islamic astronomy by Ibn al-Hayṭam about 1000 AD. In fact, the ninth sphere is probably an invention of Ptolemy himself and had become fully integrated in the standard philosophical cosmology by the time of Simplicius (*In de Caelo*, 462, 20–31 Heiberg)".

Finally, in the sixteenth chapter, we find a compendium of Alexander of Aphrodisias' treatise *On the Principles of the Universe* (*Fī mabādī' al-kull*). The compendium of this work corresponds to the Arabic translation attributed to Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd Allāh.⁷⁴ It is however a chapter of relative interest since the text has been revised in such a way as to harmonize it with Ptolemaic astronomical theories of time in the first place and, secondly, with Themistius' exegesis of *Lambda* presented in the previous chapters and more in general with the unitary vision of Greek metaphysics held by the author. This is clear right from the chapter's title: *On the Emanation of Potency and Order from the First Principle* (*Fī sarayān al-qūwa wa-l-nizām min al-mabda' al-awwal*), with the stress placed on the Neoplatonic doctrine of emanation.

In her study *'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's Bearbeitung von Buch Lambda der aristotelischen Metaphysik* Angelika Neuwirth analyzes at length the sources of chapters 13–16 of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* and attempts to identify the various levels of the genesis of our text (*historische Schichten*) chapter by chapter.⁷⁵ From her analysis of chapter thirteen it emerges that the re-elaboration of *Lambda* is mostly presented as a paraphrase of Alexander and Themistius, even though some passages introduce monotheistic and/or Neoplatonic thoughts. She observes, furthermore, that the astronomical theory of reference is Ptolemaic. Neuwirth wonders whether these doctrinal traits present in the compendium of *Lambda*, different in their origin, period of formation and tendency, have been deliberately put together for the first time in the *Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*, or whether they were already grouped together in 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's source. To respond to this problem, Neuwirth posits the existence of three different levels supporting our text: i. the sources in their Arabic-Islamic tradition, ii. the relevance of our text for textual criticism of the sources, and iii. the transformations which the sources themselves have undergone in our text. On the basis of this triple analysis, Neuwirth concludes that the authorship of the re-elaboration of *Lambda* presented in the *Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* must probably be divided between 1. Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary, two-thirds of which was translated into Arabic by Abū Bišr Mattā; 2. Themistius' paraphrase completely translated into Arabic by Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn; 3. anonymous Arabic transmitters who produced scholia which were more easily readable than Alexander's commentary on the text of *Metaph. Lambda*

⁷⁴ Cf. the apparatus of *loci similes*, Neuwirth (1976), 90–122.

⁷⁵ Neuwirth (1976), 162–191.

1–6; 4. an anonymous glossator of Themistius' paraphrase; and 5. the person who transmitted the fusion of the scholia of Alexander on *Metaph. Lambda* 1–6 and Themistius' paraphrase of *Metaph. Lambda* 6–10 (if it was not 'Abd al-Laṭīf himself). Steps 1 to 6 finally culminate in 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, who compiled his paraphrase of *Lambda* beginning with work from this commentary, but also consulting marginal glosses and adding elements of Neoplatonic interpretation in order to harmonize the metaphysical doctrine set out here with monotheistic Islamic theology. This conclusion by Neuwirth derives from a consideration of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's philosophical activity as merely receptive, and it seems to me that some qualifications should be added. Our author, in fact, demonstrates a critical awareness in his use of the sources, and a perceptible aim at constructing a coherent and unitary science of metaphysics. He evidently depends on the inheritance of a 'common context' in which the sources used, for the most part, already fused and integrated with each other. This common context, as we will see in the course of this chapter, is the tradition of the *falsafa* itself from its initial formation to its systematization by al-Fārābī, rediscovered by 'Abd al-Laṭīf in Cairo, after years of Avicennian study.

2.2. *Alexander of Aphrodisias' De Providentia*

In the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*, the exposition of *Lambda* is followed by three chapters which discuss the theme of the *πρόνοια* of the First Principle. Because of the influence of Themistius' exegesis, this theme, already introduced by 'Abd al-Laṭīf in the previous chapters, is now discussed at length. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's main source is Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De Providentia*.⁷⁶

Aristotle had affirmed that the movement of all beings derives from the First Mover, which does not undertake any activity other than thinking itself. The opponents of Aristotle, especially those of the Imperial Age, had derived the consequence that for Aristotle the First Mover had no awareness whatsoever of its own effect on heavenly movement, nor even less of its own accidental effect on the sublunary world. On the contrary, for Alexander, and *a fortiori* for the Arabic interpreters, a faith in a God compassionate towards his creation, but unaware of it, would have been a contradiction in terms. Alexander's treatise on providence,

⁷⁶ Alexandri Aphrodiensis *praeter commentaria Scripta Minora, Supplementum Aristotelicum* II.2, edidit I. Bruns, Berlin 1892.

therefore, was for the first *falāsifa* a strong support in the attempt to grant to Aristotle a doctrine of the relationship between the First Principle and the world which was exempt from such an unacceptable consequence.

Alexander begins his treatise by setting out the doctrine of the Epicurean school (*ἀπρονουσία* attributed to the gods) and that of the Stoic school (divine presence in all things). These doctrines confute each other: it is therefore necessary to tread a middle way. Close examination of the doctrines of his predecessors fills roughly a third of the treatise. Following Aristotle, Alexander gives this doxographical account a dialectic intention: once he gets to the point of presenting Aristotle's doctrine, it must prevail over the others. This section is followed by an account of Alexander's doctrine, which is, however, attributed to Aristotle himself. Alexander affirms that the generation and permanence of beings according to species does not take place at random, that is to say, without the providence of the First Principle who regulates the order of movement, the just proportion between distances, and the double movement of the stars. The providence of the First Principle unfolds both above and below the sphere of the moon: since that which provides must be distinct and separate from that which is provided for – just as the shepherd is distinct from the flock – if providence exists above the sphere of the moon, it necessarily acts on something different, namely on the sublunary world. Providence is not an accidental consequence of divine activity, nor is it the primary activity of the First Principle: since it is that which is essentially good, the First Principle makes all those things which are near it participate in the good, to the extent to which they can participate in it. The First Principle, therefore, thinks and knows primarily only itself, but it eternally knows the events of the world too, subject to becoming, in so far as it exercises its own direction over them through the celestial order.

The first introduction in Arabic to Alexander's *De Providentia* came about thanks to the work of an anonymous translator, very probably belonging to the circle of translators around al-Kindī. Al-Kindī, in fact, reproduces the themes dealt with in Alexander's treatise in his works.⁷⁷ This translation, entitled *On the Government of the Heavenly Spheres* (*Fī l-tadbīrāt al-falakīyya*), is a re-elaborated version of the second part of Alexander's work, in which the latter sets out his own interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine. The translation of the entire treatise into Arabic however seems to date back to the beginning of the tenth century: it was

⁷⁷ Cf. Ruland (1976); Zimmermann (1986), 119–153 and in particular 129 and the following.

translated from Syriac by Abū Biṣr Mattā ibn Yūnus.⁷⁸ This second version was entitled *On Providence* (*Fī l-ināya*).⁷⁹

The two translations are both preserved in ms. El Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo, *Derenbourg* 798 (*Casiri* 794) and in our İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279. M. Zonta maintains that since the surviving manuscript tradition has transmitted the two translations one next to the other, learned Arabs of the Middle Ages read and knew the two translations together. The small number of manuscripts that have reached us, however, does not seem to me to provide sufficient support to this thesis. Zonta also affirms that there could have been contamination between the two translations in 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's work. Indeed, according to Zimmermann, 'Abd al-Laṭīf used the translation made for al-Kindī as his source for chapter seventeen of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* entitled *How Providence Penetrates from the Superior to the Inferior World* (*Fī kayfiyyat nufūd al-tadbīr min al-'ālam al-a'lā ilā l-'ālam al-adnā*; ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, 172v15–173v24; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 130.10–134.1), and the second translation for the following chapter, entitled *On Eternal Providence* (*Fī l-ināya al-azaliyya*). In this latter chapter 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's reference to the doxography contained in the first part of Alexander's work constitutes, according to Zimmermann, a further proof of the fact that our author had a translation of Alexander's entire treatise. These conclusions, however, do not appear to be sufficiently proven.⁸⁰

'Abd al-Laṭīf therefore mutually harmonizes two solutions which are in reality quite different from one another, not to say alternative: that put forward by Alexander regarding the problem of divine providence and, more generally, regarding the relationship between the First Principle and the world; and that of Themistius, which 'Abd al-Laṭīf had already made his own in the course of his paraphrase of *Lambda*, whereby God knows that which is different from Him without for this reason coming out of

⁷⁸ Cf. above Chapter I, 67–69.

⁷⁹ Ruland (1976); Cf. Grant (1964), 265–79; Fazzo (2000), 399–419; Thillet (2003).

⁸⁰ Zonta (1999), 87–93. Unfortunately, in referring to 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's work, he says that the compendium of metaphysics is entitled *Risāla fī l-'ilm al-ilāhī* (*Letter on the Divine Science*). Now, the latter is the little treatise discovered by Kraus in ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, and also preserved in ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279 (the same mss. which contains 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-tab'ā*). It is a more or less faithful paraphrase of several passages from Plotinus' *Enneads* V, mistakenly attributed to al-Fārābī: cf. Kraus (1940–41), 280–295. Zonta maintains that the compendium is preserved only in ms. *Carullah* 1279; this, too, is inexact: cf. above 218–224 for information on the two manuscripts which contain the work.

Himself, since He contains in Him all the ideas of all things, and is the norm and the condition of the intelligibility of the world.

In the eighteenth chapter of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*, which contains a paraphrase of the most complete translation by Abū Biṣr Mattā ibn Yūnus – that entitled *On Eternal Providence (Fī l-ināya al-azaliyya*; ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 173v 24–175r6; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 134.1–138.7) –, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf maintains that the action of God’s providence expresses itself both in the superior and in the inferior world; but if in the first case the relationship between divine providence and the superior world is immediate, in the second case it is mediated by the superior world. He affirms, moreover, that if the inferior world was capable of a greater receptivity with regard to providence, there would be in it neither greed nor avidity nor any other deficiency.

God’s providence extends over the high and the low world. It overlooks nothing which deserves any degree of perfection, where previously it had been impossible for it to give it what it deserved. We have already stated that the high world, in accordance with its fitness, has a larger share of this Providence and besides, needs no intermediary. The low world has a much smaller share in it, since its matter cannot endure more of it. If it could endure more, there would be neither greed nor envy nor deficiency here. The share which occurs in the low world reaches it through the mediation of the high world (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 173v24–29; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 134.1–6.).⁸¹

The relationship between divine providence and those who receive it, however, cannot be thought of as a causal relationship, since in this case “the noble would come into being because of the ignoble and the earlier because of the later”, which is shameful and absurd, nor this relationship can be thought as purely accidental. Both situations are unsuitable for the First Principle, which cannot therefore exercise providence as its primary action, but cannot either be considered as that from which providence derives accidentally (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 173v29–33 ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 134.7–11). ‘Abd al-Laṭīf then affirms that the existence and the order of things derive from the existence of God, who is absolute good. All men, he says, agree on this vision of God (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 173v33–174r1; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub,

⁸¹ English trans. by Rosenthal (1975), 156, partially modified.

Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma 117, p. 134.11–15). 'Abd al-Laṭīf returns to the image of fire:

He does what is good like the fire which warms everything near it, though its existence and its warmth do not exist because of what it warms but in order to preserve continually its own special nature. Thus, too, it is with God the highest (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 174r2–3; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 134.15–16).⁸²

In this way He concedes to all existing things as much good as they, for their proximity to him, are able to receive (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 174r3–4; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 134.17).

If, in addition, we were able to assume that fire knows and wills its own nature and the warming and illumination proceeding from it, the comparison would be complete (Cf. ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 174r4–5; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 134.17–19).⁸³

But this, says 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, is an example suited to the student, who in order to understand must supply that which is missing on his own. Divine potency reaches the bodies of the sublunary world willingly and consciously. The bodies of the sublunary world are able to enjoy the potency which emanates from God and tend to move towards him (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 174r5–8; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 134.19–22).

Hence we claim that everything that subsists naturally contains a divine power, which is active and protects all that is passive and inclined to allow itself to be protected, and we say that every natural thing can be called a divine work, and nature a divine craftsman (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 174r8–9; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 134.22–25).⁸⁴

At this point the discussion moves to man. Man has been given the capacity for reason, due to which he can carry out those actions that lead him to acquire the happiness appropriate to him. The same rational capacity allows him to know divine things and, in virtue of this knowledge, man is superior to all other things that come to being and pass away. At times, however, he uses this rational capacity to obtain, not the good and virtues,

⁸² English trans. by Rosenthal (1975), 156, modified.

⁸³ English trans. by Rosenthal (1975), 156.

⁸⁴ English trans. by Rosenthal (1975), 157.

but vices. This can happen because providence allows man the capacity to be able to acquire virtues, but the success of this enterprise lies in the will and in the choice made by man himself. This fact also explains the difference between one individual and another, the ruler and the subject:

Thus there are three possibilities open to providence. Firstly, it can from the very beginning withhold this power from us, so that we would then be in the same situation as all other animals. Secondly, it can give us the virtues directly; we should then be in the same situation as the angels and the heavenly bodies, and that is impossible in the world of generation and decay. Thus, only the third possibility remains for it, namely, to give us the power for the acquisition of the virtues and to leave success to our will and choice. By this means, we are superior to all other animals in ability, and we also differ from one another, so that there are among us rulers and ruled, kings and slaves (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 174r31–35; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 136. 2–7).⁸⁵

There are various reasons which prevent man from attaining happiness: a weak nature little disposed to the good, frequenting bad people, a bad style of life, and a lack of knowledge or a guide (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 174v1–2; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 136.7–9).

This, concludes ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, is the opinion of Aristotle regarding divine providence. This is followed by the doxography which Alexander on the other hand placed at the beginning of his treatise. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf rejects the atomist theory of Democritus, in which everything is the result of chance. He then presents the opposite theory of Plato and Zeno, in which, on the contrary, nothing in this world happens outside a providential plan and God pervades all things. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf maintains that this theory is very true and excellent. This must be the theory followed by the masses, since it ensures political order and social harmony: the prophets proposed it and with them the Koran itself. Nevertheless, he continues, this theory leaves room for some criticisms (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 174v3–15; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 136.9–137.1).

For if all things fall under providence, where do evil and harm come from? And how does it come about that some men merit praise and reward and others blame and punishment? And actions based on reflection as well as education and the use of instruments become futile. Religious precepts,

⁸⁵ English trans. by Rosenthal (1975), 158.

politics, instruction and different kinds of education also become futile (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 174v15–18; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 137.1–4).⁸⁶

Aristotle's teaching resolves these problems by showing that providence gives men the capacity to acquire the good in different degrees of predisposition, but it leaves to the individual the task of acquiring it. The holy Koran 90,8–10 (*The Land*) says: "Have you not made two eyes for him and a tongue and two lips and led him on both roads?" (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 174v19–21; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 137.1–8). 'Abd al-Laṭīf then goes on to speak of the different temperaments of men, which are also influential in the acquisition of good (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, 174v23–30; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 137.8–18).

'Abd al-Laṭīf concludes with an examination of the reasons why certain things perish before arriving at their maturity.

From this account of chapter eighteen of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* it is clear that, due to Alexander's treatise *On Providence* (*Kitāb fī l-ināya*), 'Abd al-Laṭīf introduces the problem of evil and places his examination of those aspects of the doctrine of providence that regard man and his actions within the framework of a discussion more of a cosmological nature – contained in chapter seventeen. For this reason, though he favours Themistius' solution, whereby God knows all things in that he contains within him the ideas of all things, which he holds to be closest to the dogma of the Koran, 'Abd al-Laṭīf has recourse to Alexander concerning the problems of evil, man's free will, and divine justice.

In chapter nineteen, entitled *On Ability* (*Fī l-istiṭā'a*; ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 175r6–175v16; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 138.7–140.11), 'Abd al-Laṭīf goes further in his analysis of man's action and adds some corollaries to the previous explanations. He states that man is the noblest of the existing things produced by nature, because of the proximity of the celestial body, and the only one to participate in the intellect. For this reason he can direct his actions to the good and avoid evil. If he did not possess this inner ability to direct his action, he would not have laws and religious norms for his action; nor praise or defamation, nor reward or punishment, nor order or prohibition, nor reproof or honour nor consultation or

⁸⁶ English trans. by Rosenthal (1975), 158–159.

regrets. So this inner ability to direct his action is the most important thing for man.

2.3. *The Liber de causis and the Elements of Theology by Proclus*

The twentieth chapter of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* is entitled *On What the Wise Man Said in the Book of the Exposition of the Good (Fī mā qāla l-Ḥakīm fī kitāb ḫdāḥ al-ḥayr)*.⁸⁷ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf presents his own epitome of the *Book of the Exposition of the Pure Good (Kitāb ḫdāḥ al-ḥayr al-mahd)*, that is to say, the *Liber de causis* of the Latin Middle Ages,⁸⁸ and proposition 54, on the difference between eternity and time, from Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*.⁸⁹

As is known, the *Liber de causis*, attributed to Aristotle, is in reality a selection based on the 211 propositions which constitute Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*, re-organized into a completely new whole. An integral version is preserved in three Arabic manuscripts: Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, or. 209; Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Kütüphanesi, *İsmail Saib* I 1696, fols 78r–90v; and finally İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Hacı Mahmut* 5683, fols 103v–120r.⁹⁰ A second version of the *Liber de causis* has been discovered in ms. İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, *Ahmed III*, 3287, fols 76r–95v.⁹¹

The *Liber de causis*, like the other sources used by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf in his treatise on metaphysics, was also written in a cultural climate dominated by al-Kindī, as Endress has demonstrated on the basis of a lexical and stylistic examination of the work.⁹² Indeed the *Liber de causis* bears a strong resemblance, which is both doctrinal – the Aristotelian coincidence between theological science and knowledge of First Causes, for

⁸⁷ This chapter has been edited on the basis of the single manuscript Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pašā, ḥikma 117*, in Badawī (1955a), 248–256 and has been translated into English on the basis of both manuscripts by Taylor (1984), 236–248. In this paragraph I quote Taylor’s translation. Cf. also Anawati (1956), 73–110, in which Anawati analyzes ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī’s epitome and revises the edition by Badawī.

⁸⁸ Cf. D’Ancona-Taylor (2003), 469–528.

⁸⁹ Cf. Endress (1973), 271 for proposition 54; Jolivet (1979), 55–75; Zimmermann (1994), 9–51.

⁹⁰ For the Leiden manuscript, see its description in Bardenhewer (1882), 4–9 (repr. Frankfurt a. Main 1961), and in Endress (1973), 18–19. A description of the Ankara and İstanbul manuscripts can be found in Taylor (1982), 251–264. See also Taylor (1981); the edition of the Arabic text in Badawī (1955a), 1–33, based on the Leiden manuscript and on conjectures from the Latin version.

⁹¹ Thillet-Oudaïmah (2001–2002), 293–368.

⁹² Cf. Endress (1973), 76–193; for the history of studies on the hypotheses of the “Latin” composition of the *Liber de causis* see D’Ancona-Taylor (2003), 484–488.

example – and textual, with al-Kindī's *On First Philosophy*, to such an extent that it might be thought that the author of the Proclian compilation was al-Kindī himself.⁹³

On closer examination, the *Liber de causis* reveals a careful construction, born out of an attempt to extract from Proclus' *Elements of Theology* those metaphysical propositions suited for a textbook of Neoplatonic metaphysics, which, according to the Plotinian scheme, presents a tripartite hierarchy of supersensible realities, namely, the One, intellect, and soul, without reproducing the typically Proclian hierarchy of intermediate principles.⁹⁴ A second aspect to stress is the interpretation in creationistic terms of the activity of the First Principle: the True One (*wāḥid ḥaqq*), also defined as only being (*annīyya faqāṭ*), produces being: its most universal effect in things is being. The work also formulates a rigorous negative theology: the One, as First Cause and condition itself of the intelligibility of things, cannot be the object of our knowledge because it transcends both thinking and being thought. The most precise idea that we can have of the First Cause comes from an examination of its nearest effect, that is, the intellect, which is a simple, intelligent substance which governs the soul and, through the mediation of the Soul, the world. The intellect, though it is the *ra'īs* of creation, is nevertheless a secondary principle with respect to the One which is the only, transcendent, true creator and provident principle.⁹⁵

The epitome of the *Liber de causis*, presented in the first part of the twentieth chapter of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 175v16–177v13; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 140.12–147.7), is faithful to its source, with the exception of one single important difference: as we will see, the One is identified with the First Intellect.

'Abd al-Laṭīf reproduces all the propositions of the *Liber de causis*, except numbers 4, 10, 18, and 20, and follows the same order in which they are set out. He also adds proposition 54 of Proclus' *Elements of*

⁹³ D'Ancona (1995).

⁹⁴ Cf. D'Ancona (1989), pp. 1–38; Taylor (1992), 11–40.

⁹⁵ Cf. Bardenhever (1882), 92.10–93.4, 95.1–2; Badawī (1955a), 19.9–12, 20.10: "The first and immutable Being is the cause of the causes and if it communicates being to all things, it communicates it to them for creation. The first Life, however, when it communicates life to the things subordinate to it does not do so for creation, but for information. Thus the Intellect too when it communicates the Intellect to things subordinate to it does so for information, not for creation, because creation is proper to the First Cause only [...]. The First Cause governs all the things that are subordinate to it without mixing with them in any way".

Theology.⁹⁶ In a second part of the same chapter he presents the opinions of Aristotle and Plato, or rather Empedocles, on the role of love in the constitution of things. Finally, in a third part, after returning to some questions set out in the chapter, he devotes a closing paragraph to the nature of divine science and the science of “sovereignty”.

At the beginning of the chapter he stresses the primacy of the most universal cause, which is, therefore, further from its effect with respect to the causes nearer to the effect and hence apparently more important.

Every universal First Cause pours forth more abundantly on its effect than does the universal second cause. And if we suppose that the second cause removes its power from the thing, it is not necessary that the First Cause remove its power from it, because the First Cause acts on the effect of the second cause before the second cause acts on it. So when the second cause which is immediately adjacent to the effect acts, its act is not able to do without the First Cause which is above it. And when the second separates itself from the effect, the First does not separate itself from it because it is cause of its cause and is more a cause of the thing than its proximate cause which is immediately adjacent to it (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 175v16–20; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 140.12–17).⁹⁷

The example he gives is that of proposition 1 of the *Liber de causis* in which the greatest importance of the most remote cause is demonstrated by the relationship between what is, all living things, and man. Once man is eliminated, what remains is that which is living; once the living is eliminated, remains that which is; but when this latter is removed, nothing remains. The remote cause is the cause of its own effect more than the proximate cause of the effect is (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 175v 20–22; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 140.17–20).

This thesis is followed by a sort of description of the hierarchy of the intelligible realities. The First Cause is above time and eternity, indeed it is the cause of eternity. As for the intellect, which is the second cause, it is with eternity above time. The first heavenly body, on the other hand, is in a sense with time, but in another it is the cause of time and hence it too is with eternity. The beings, then, whose existence comes about because of movement, follow time, and those whose existence does not come about because of movement are with time, but not in it. The soul is an effect of

⁹⁶ Cf. above note 88.

⁹⁷ English translation by Taylor (1984), 238–239.

the First Cause through the mediation of the intellect, has three powers, and carries out three actions in virtue of those powers:

a divine power from which there proceeds a divine operation by which it governs nature; an intellectual power from which there proceeds an intellectual operation which is the knowing of things; an essential power of soul from which there proceeds an operation of soul which moves the first body and all the natural bodies (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 175v27–28; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 140.25–141.2).⁹⁸

The First Cause transcends any possibility of our knowledge. If knowing the true nature of things in fact means knowing their causes, since by definition the First Cause has no causes that precede it, it is unknowable in its true nature. It can only be known by approximation, through a description of the secondary causes.

The First Cause transcends description because it is above every cause. It is described only through secondary causes which it illuminates because the First Cause illuminates every cause and effect while itself not being illuminated by any other light because it is the pure light above which there is no other light. For this reason the First Cause alone came to elude description, since there is no cause above it through which it might be known. But every thing is described and known only by way of its causes, so what does not have a cause and is not an effect of anything at all, is not known through a First Cause and is never described because it transcends description (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 175v28–32; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 141.2–7).⁹⁹

This theory of the unpredicableness of the First Cause is followed by a long section describing intellect. The intellect is with eternity, above time, and is not subject to division, because everything which is divisible is divisible in magnitude, in number, or in motion, but all these kinds of division are under time. It is one, in so far as it is the first thing which originated from the First Cause, but it is multiple with respect to the multiplicity of the gifts that come to it from the First Cause. The intellect knows what is above it – the gifts that come to it from the First Cause – and what is below it – the things of which it is the cause. But the intellect knows its cause and its effect through its substance, that is to say that it perceives things intellectually. It grasps intellectually either the intellectual things or the sensible ones. The First Cause, which is the Pure Good, pours all

⁹⁸ English translation by Taylor (1984), 239.

⁹⁹ English translation by Taylor (1984), 239; partially modified.

that is good into the intellect and into all that which exists through the mediation of the intellect (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 175v32–176r12; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 141. 7–24).

Although ‘Abd al-Laṭīf faithfully follows his model, he parts company with it to maintain that the First Cause is the First Intellect: “The stability and subsistence of the intellect is through the Pure Good which is the First Intellect” (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 176r6–7; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 141. 17–18). As we have seen in the paraphrase of *Metaphysics Lambda*,¹⁰⁰ for ‘Abd al-Laṭīf the self-reflection of the divine thought does not cause composition and multiplicity within the First Principle, because in it there is the perfect coincidence of the thinking principle, the act of thinking, and the object. Here he says:

Every knower which knows its essence reverts to its essence completely, because knowledge is an operation. When the knower knows its essence, it has reverted to its essence by its operation, for the knower’s knowledge of its essence is from it and towards it: it is from it inasmuch as it is a knower and to it inasmuch as it is known. And we mean by the reversion of the substance to its essence only that it is self-subsistent and stable, not needing in its self-subsistence anything other than itself to make it subsist, because it is a simple, self-sufficient substance (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 176r24–27; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 142.15–18).¹⁰¹

‘Abd al-Laṭīf then adds that the First Cause is in itself the power which is infinite: it is life, knowledge, the Pure Good, and the most brilliant light. All things have being because of the First Being according to the manner of creation.

All things possess being because of the First Being; all living things are self-moving because of the first life; and all intellectual things have knowledge because of the First Intellect.¹⁰² The First Being is quiescent while being the cause of causes and gives all things their beings through creation.¹⁰³ The first life gives life to what is below it, not in the manner of creation, but in the manner of form. And, likewise, the intellect gives knowledge to what is below it in the manner of a form, not in the manner of a creation, because creation belongs to the First Cause alone (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye

¹⁰⁰ Cf. above 239–243.

¹⁰¹ English translation by Taylor (1984), 242, partially modified.

¹⁰² Taylor (1984), 242, translates *‘aql* as intelligence.

¹⁰³ Taylor (1984), 242; translates *ibdā’* as origination.

Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 176r32–176v1; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 142.23–143.3).¹⁰⁴

The First Cause governs the things to which it gives life, yet without mixing with them, and it pours forth goodness over all things in one emanation. Everything receives that emanation according to its own potentiality.

'Abd al-Laṭīf has appointed the 'First Intellect' as the First Cause. He maintains that First Intellect is above every name and above perfection, since that which is perfect is that which is sufficient in itself, but is not sufficient to create something else on its own nor for something else to pour forth from it. The First Intellect is an infinite and inexhaustible good which pours out goodness and fills all worlds with goodness. We observe at this point a certain fluctuation in 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's attempt to establish a perfect conformity between the First Cause as presented in the *Liber de causis* and the Aristotelian First Principle presented in the chapters devoted to the paraphrase of *Metaphysics Lambda*: is the First Cause the First Intellect or does it precede intellect? Immediately after having identified the First Cause with the First Intellect, he writes:

Since the First Intellect¹⁰⁵ is created,¹⁰⁶ it comes to know and govern the things inasmuch as it is divine, because the special characteristic of the Intellect is knowing and its completeness and perfection are that it be a knower. God – may He be praised – precedes the Intellect in governance and governs all things with a governance of a more exalted and transcendent order than the Intellect's governance because He is one who gives the Intellect the power to govern. And the things to which the governance of the intellect does not reach, there the governance of the First Principle does reach (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 176v9–12; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 143.13–16).¹⁰⁷

Hence God precedes the intellect in ruling things: he orders the intellect to govern. But once more, having stated that the self-subsistent substance is not generated from something else, 'Abd al-Laṭīf maintains that intellect does not need anything other than itself in its conceptualizing and formation (*taṣawwuri-hi wa taṣwiri-hi*), that it is perfect and complete eternally, and that it is the cause of itself.

¹⁰⁴ English translation by Taylor (1984), 242.

¹⁰⁵ Taylor (1984), 242, translates 'aql as intelligence.

¹⁰⁶ Taylor (1984), 243, translates *mubdlī'* as originated.

¹⁰⁷ Taylor (1984), 242.

It came to be eternally the cause of its own formation and perfection only in virtue of its relation to its cause, for that relation simultaneously is its formation and its perfection. Therefore it does not fall under generation and corruption because it is one, simple and incomposite, while being eternally joined to its cause. The thing falls under corruption through its separation from its cause. But so long as the thing is linked with its adherent noble cause, it is not destroyed and does not corrupt. And since the Intellect¹⁰⁸ has an eternal relation to its cause and is the cause of that relation, then it is cause of itself and it is simultaneously the cause and the effect (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 176v15–21; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 143.20–144.3).¹⁰⁹

At this point ‘Abd al-Laṭif introduces Proclus’ proposition 54 “On the difference between eternity and time”. It is introduced here to explain the fact that between the eternal substance which is above time and the substances which are below time and which are subject to generation and corruption it is necessary for there to be an intermediary. This intermediary must have aspects in common with both the substances named above, that is it must be above time, but it must carry out its action below it. If eternal substance above time is ‘Being’, while the substances in time subject to generation and corruption are ‘that which comes to be’, the intermediary between them will be a substance which is ‘that which is and comes to be at the same time by different aspects’. Only the One is the True One and cause of unity in everything, while that which follows the One is not pure one and has some form of multiplicity in it (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 176v25–177r10; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 144.7–145.8).

Everything falling under eternity is truly a being and everything falling altogether under time, both in its substance and its act is something subject to coming-into-being. And everything falling under eternity by its substance and under time by its operation is a substance which is characterized by being and coming-into-being simultaneously in different respects. Through this intermediate, the generated substance falling under time has existence linked with pure being which is the cause of perpetuity and the cause of perpetual things and destructible things (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 177r1–4; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 144.21–25).¹¹⁰

Aristotle, continues ‘Abd al-Laṭif al-Bağdādī, affirmed that every thing receives causality from the First Principle, desires it, comes near to it and

¹⁰⁸ Taylor (1984), 243, translates *‘aql* as intelligence.

¹⁰⁹ Taylor (1984), 243.

¹¹⁰ Taylor (1984), 245.

assimilates itself to it in the degree and by the natural disposition which are possible for it. Aristotle says that the world of coming into being is constructed from the contraries and by the prevailing of one over the other. This conflict is commensurate with the proximity of the heavenly bodies and with the circular motion of the sphere of the zodiac and the different inclination of the stars in latitude and longitude.¹¹¹ This was explained by Plato in terms of love and conflict.¹¹² In other words, he says, the First Principle is only loved, while all the rest loves and is loved, that is, it loves that which is superordinate to it and is loved by what is subordinate to it. In this way, harmony reigns; but if contraries get the upper hand, corruption is produced. This is what Plato calls conflict. Therefore “the things that exist are composed of love and conflict”, “their causes are love and conflict”, “conflict always separates and love always unites”.¹¹³ We, however, must not think of love and conflict as two eternal and subsisting substances in competition with the creating principle, God. (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 177r11–23; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 145.8–25).

At this point 'Abd al-Laṭīf implicitly asserts that there is agreement between Plato and Aristotle, suggesting that Plato's forms must be regarded not as independently existing things, but as ideas in the mind of the Creator.¹¹⁴ The true philosopher maintains in fact that everything that exists is in the essence of the Creator. He writes:

Likewise, with respect to the proponents of the forms and those who classify them as perpetual, quiescent, everlasting, self-subsistent, universal substances, these are ground-less statements and idle inventions. What is permitted for the noble philosopher is that he says that all existents are in the essence of the Creator (*al-bāri'*) – may He be praised! – existing in a simple way which does not require multiplicity or plurality in His essence, nor is it permitted that this be imagined in any way (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 177r24–26; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 145.25–146.3).¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Cf. Taylor (1984), 323, note 85. Neuwirth (1976), 31.8–9; 69.8–10.

¹¹² Despite the fact that the manuscript bears the name Plato, the doctrines attributed to him in this passage are clearly those of Empedocles. The term used here by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-BaĠdādī for *νείκοξ* is *galaba* (victory) as in Ḥunayn, and not *'adāwa* (enmity): cf. Rudolph (1989), 136–137; Daiber (1980), 42–43; Serra (1990), 199–206.

¹¹³ Cf. the Aristotelian discussion of Empedocles' doctrine in *Metaph. A* 4, 984b 31–985b 5.

¹¹⁴ Zimmermann (1986), 181, suggests the analogy of the solution adopted by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-BaĠdādī with the one he could have found in al-Fārābī's *Harmony between Plato and Aristotle*: cf. Martini Bonadeo (2008), 69–71, 211–219.

¹¹⁵ Taylor (1984), 246.

After this *excursus* and a brief summary of the process of the ascent and descent to and from the True and Pure One, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf goes back to speak of the difference between eternity and time, eternal substance and substances subject to generation and corruption, and specifies that the One is above eternity and time and indeed is the cause of them, while the intellect and the soul are with eternity and their activities are in eternity, the heavenly bodies are above time and with eternity as to their substance, but their action is with time, and finally the world of generation and corruption is below time (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 177r26–177v6; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 146.3–22).

The chapter closes with a very instructive re-examination of the contents of the science that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf is describing in his treatise, which echoes the description of the Science of Sovereignty (*‘ilm al-rubūbiyya*) of the first *mīmar* in the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*: it is not a physical science that limits itself to ascend from effects to causes, but a science which, when it comes close to causes, is able to go back to consider the effects in greater depth approaching divine knowledge of things.

We say that investigation into existents is by means of two sorts of procedures. One is that we proceed according to universal powers and general expressions by way of the connection of effects with their causes. For when we ascend from the effects to the causes, this science is natural. And if we begin to descend from the causes to effects then this science is ‘something which is beyond physics’¹¹⁶ (*mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a*). But we are only able to descend when we have ascended by appropriate essential degrees. Then when we descend we will not find those degrees equal, but rather we will increase in discernment and penetrating knowledge. By what radiates on us from the higher light, our investigation of what is below it will expand and by that we will be able to regard everything which extends beyond it and we will come to judge the effects from their causes. And whoever has a true position of priority in this upper region and is familiar with it and also one from whom perplexity and dismay have disappeared and who has received in place tranquillity and familiarity, regards those worlds and their parts one by one and investigates the essences stripped of relations and additions and ascribes to every world what is in it and most appropriate for it. This science is called Divine Philosophy (*al-falsafa al-ilāhiyya*) and it is the Science of Sovereignty (*‘ilm al-rubūbiyya*) (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 177v6–13; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 146.22–147.7).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Taylor (1984), 247, translates *al-ṭabī‘a* as nature.

¹¹⁷ Taylor (1984), 247–248.

Chapter twenty-one, which follows the epitome of the *Liber de causis*, also uses Proclus' *Elements of Theology* as its source. In fact the chapter, entitled *On the Theology That is the Science of Divine Sovereignty* (*Fi Uṭlūġiyā wa-huwa 'ilm al-rubūbiyya*), re-elaborates a series of propositions taken from Proclus' work, four questions from Alexander of Aphrodisias and an adaptation of John Philoponus' *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum* IX, 11 ascribed to Alexander (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 177v13–179v30; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 147.7–154.14).¹¹⁸

The contents of this chapter are totally analogous to those of the selection of Proclus' propositions preserved in ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 60v–66v, which includes propositions 1–3, 5, 62, 86, 15–17, 21, 54, 76, 78, 91, 79, 80, 167, and 72–74. As part of this selection there are also four *quaestiones* of Alexander of Aphrodisias and the adaptation of John Philoponus' *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum* IX, 8 and IX, 11¹¹⁹ which are placed between proposition 54 and proposition 76. This collection, entitled *What Alexander of Aphrodisias Extracted from the Book of Aristotle Called Theology, Namely the Doctrine of Divine Sovereignty* (*Mā staḥraġa-hu l-Iskandar al-Afrūdīsī min kitāb Aristūṭālīs al-musammā Ṭlūġiyā wa-ma'nā-hu l-kalām fī l-rubūbiyya* = D27),¹²⁰ is the only one which preserves these twenty propositions of Proclus. These propositions feature also in other manuscripts, but divided into small groups.¹²¹ The twenty propositions have been edited by Endress in his masterly *Proclus Arabus*.¹²² Endress has demonstrated, moreover, against the traditional attribution of the translation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* to Abū 'Uṭmān al-Dimašqī (d. 900), that the Arabic translation of Proclus' propositions and of Alexander's *Quaestiones* was produced in the circle of translators linked to al-Kindī and probably by Ibn al-Biṭrīq.¹²³ A further proof of this consists in that al-Kindī certainly used the Arabic Proclus.¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ This chapter has been edited in Badawī (1955), 199–208, on the basis of the single Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117.

¹¹⁹ On the Arabic tradition of Alexander's *Quaestiones* cf. Badawī (1947), 295–308; Dietrich (1964); Van Ess (1966), 148–168; Gätje (1966), 255–278; Badawī (1971), 52–55; Ruland (1979); Khalifāt (1988), 280–298; Aouad–Goulet (1989), 125–139; Fazzo–Wiesner (1993), 119–153; Zimmermann (1994), 9–51; Hasnawi (1994), 53–109; Fazzo (2003), 61–70; Rashed (2004), 9–63; Rashed (2007).

¹²⁰ Cf. Dietrich (1964), 99.

¹²¹ Cf. Rosenthal (1955a), 17; Pines (1955), 195–203; Lewin (1955), 101–108; Van Ess (1966), 148–168; Endress (1973), 34; D'Ancona–Taylor (2003), 500.

¹²² Cf. Endress (1973).

¹²³ Ibidem, 190–192.

¹²⁴ Ibidem, 242–245; Jolivet (1979), 55–75.

In his research about the origins of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*, Zimmermann considers this selection as proof of the existence of a collection of texts of post-Aristotelian metaphysics, which circulated in the milieu of al-Kindī and included the Arabic translation of several of Alexander's treatises as well as Proclus' *Elements of Theology*.¹²⁵

If chapter twenty-one of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* presents in its contents a strict analogy with the collection now described, in setting out these contents 'Abd al-Laṭīf follows his own particular order:

- (i) the paraphrase of the propositions of Proclus follow a different order: 1–3, 5, 62, 86, 78, 91, 76, 72–74, 167, 167a, 21, 16, 17, 15, 80, 79.¹²⁶
- (ii) Proposition 54, which 'Abd al-Laṭīf has already paraphrased in the previous chapter, does not appear here;
- (iii) the paraphrase of four of Alexander's *Quaestiones* of a physical and cosmological nature linked to the theme of the providence of the First Principle are placed at the end of the chapter, not among Proclus' propositions. The *Questiones* paraphrased by 'Abd al-Laṭīf are the following:
 1. *On the Fact That Form is Not in Matter As a Substrate* (*Fī anna l-ṣūra laysat fī l-hayūlā maḥmūla; quaest. I.8 = vE 32*);¹²⁷
 2. *On the Fact That What is Generated, When It Changes <Beginning With its Privation>, It Changes At the Same Time Beginning With its Contrary, According to Opinion of Aristotle* (*Fī anna l-mukawwana idā staḥāla stiḥāla min ḍiddi-hi aiḍan ma'an 'alā ra'y Aristūṭālīs; quaest. II.11 = D 7*);¹²⁸
 3. *On the World and Which of Its Parts Have Need in Their Endurance and in Their Perpetuation of the Direction of the Other Parts* (*Fī l-ālam wa-aīyu aḡzā'i-hi yaḥtāḡu fī ṭabāti-hi wa-dawāmi-hi ilā tadbīr aḡzā' uḥrā; quaest. II.19 = vE 33*);¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Zimmermann (1986), 185. Besides these twenty propositions the tradition of the Arabic Proclus numbers some other fragments, discovered in the course of the years, belonging probably to what was an integral Arabic version of Proclus' treatise: cf. Zimmermann–Brown (1973), 313–324; Pines (1986), 287–293; Zimmermann (1994), 9–51.

¹²⁶ Zimmermann (1986), 181, 178–179, has noticed that this order seems to reproduce that proposed in the *Harmony between Plato and Aristotle* where al-Fārābī quotes in order propositions 1–3, 5, 62; he seems to ignore the following eight propositions and then he turns to proposition 21 and adds other five propositions after it: cf. Martini Bonadeo (2008), 64–65, 199–201.

¹²⁷ Cf. Van Ess (1966), 153; Aouad–Goulet (1989), 133; Fazzo (2003), 64–65.

¹²⁸ Cf. Dietrich (1964), 95; Aouad–Goulet (1989), 132; Zimmermann (1994), 9–51; Fazzo (2003), 64–65.

¹²⁹ Cf. Van Ess (1966), 153; Aouad–Goulet (1989), 133; Fazzo–Wiesner (1993), 119–153; Fazzo (2003), 64–65.

4. *On the Power Coming From the Movement of the Sublime Body to the Bodies Under Generation and Corruption (Fī l-qūwwa al-ātiya min ḥarakat al-ḡirm al-šarīf ilā l-aḡrām al-wāqī'a taḥta l-kawn wa-l-fasād; quaest. II.3 = vE 34)*,¹³⁰
- (iv) the paraphrase of the adaptation of John Philoponus' *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum* IX, 8, 338.21–25; 339.2–24 Rabe; IX, 11, 345.4–335.26 Rabe,¹³¹ ascribed to Alexander and entitled *On the Refutation of Those Who Do Not Accept That a Thing is Cause of Another (Fī ibtāl qawl man qāla inna-hu lā yakūnu šay' 'illā min šay'* = D16)¹³² completes the chapter. Hasnawi observes that 'Abd al-Laṭīf does not preserve the dialectical structure of the argument of its source (= the part of D27 in which the adaptation of John Philoponus' text is presented), where the two arguments discussed are these: nothing comes from nothing and everything comes from non-being. The second argument is never mentioned and 'Abd al-Laṭīf proceeds to articulate arguments in defence of the first thesis and other arguments in the defence of the second thesis, without pointing out the difference. From the first thesis he derives the following ideas: i. everything is caused from a thing *in potentia* (a grain of wheat is wheat *in potentia*) and ii. nature produces something from its privation which is existent. From the second thesis he derives first the idea of the double *potentia*: matter can be all forms and the First Agent has in itself all forms, and something is possible only when matter is apt to receive a form and the First Agent has the power to produce the form in matter. Secondly 'Abd al-Laṭīf discusses the opposition between nature, which is only able to put the forms into existence and the First Agent, which is able to put matter and the forms into existence.¹³³

The examination of this chapter of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's work is particularly complex. It seems to me that he sets for himself three objectives. In the first place, he wants to stress the crucial aspects of the doctrine of the First Cause understood as One, presented in the previous chapters. In the second place, he discusses the relationship between the One and the many, and, not by chance, he does so after a series of chapters (16–20) devoted to

¹³⁰ Cf. Van Ess (1966), 153; Aouad–Goulet (1989), 133; Fazzo–Wiesner (1993), 119–153; Fazzo (2003), 64–65.

¹³¹ Cf. Hasnawi (1994), 53–109.

¹³² Cf. Dietrich (1964), 97; Aouad–Goulet (1989), 137; Fazzo (2002), 109–144; Fazzo (2003), 68.

¹³³ Hasnawi (1994), 109.

the relationship between the First Cause and the world. As for these two objectives, he stresses the basic features of the First Cause: it is One and it gives unity to that which is multiple – it is the reason why Zayd is distinguished from ‘Amr; it is One in itself and the True One without composition; it is the cause of all that which is multiple in that, although it is by essence One, its causal action propagates in a multiplicity of effects; it is above eternity and time; it is life that does not end, light that does not extinguish, it is Pure Being, it is the first agent, it is unpredictable, unknowable, the apex of the hierarchy of being, composed of the intellect, intelligible realities, the Soul, the souls, and, finally, the corporeal realities of nature. Then paraphrasing Arabic Alexander’s *Quaestiones*, he turns to the providence of the First Cause with regard to its effects: this providence exists, is mediated by the spheres and preserves the species on earth. The divine power acts upon the sublunary world by contact, and, starting from the first sphere of fire, the divine power is in matter according to the receptivity of the various matters.

2.4. *The Pseudo-Theology of Aristotle*

The final chapters of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*, chapters 22, 23, and 24,¹³⁴ are taken from the *Plotiniana Arabica*, a number of texts which preserve a paraphrased translation of a section from *Enneads* IV–VI. Since the beginning of their philosophical tradition, the *falāsifa* found in the *Plotiniana Arabica* a post-Aristotelian reflection on the causality of the Platonic ideas which took into account the Aristotelian themes of the immobile causality of the First Mover and the coincidence of the nature of the supreme intelligent and the supreme intelligible. Plotinus had in fact conceived of the Ideas as true beings, intelligible models which, though remaining immobile, carry out true causal action in the sensible world and form the object of thought of the Intellect, which is the cause of the visible cosmos, through the Soul, precisely because it coincides with the whole of the rational models of things. The intelligible world and the causality which is proper to it are thus placed in the divine intellect itself because of the coincidence of the nature of the supreme intelligent and its intelligible contents, the Ideas. For Plotinus, who is at variance with Aristotelian theology, beyond Intellect there is a First Principle which transcends thought even in the form of self-reflection. In contrast, the

¹³⁴ These chapters have been edited only on the basis of the ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, *Ḥikma* 117, in Badawī (1955), 209–240.

Arabic interpreters attribute that thought to the One. It is the first and universal cause, simple, omnipresent, transcendent, and capable of producing by virtue of its nature; in addition to these Neoplatonic features, it is first Agent, Creator, supreme degree of being, God, respecting the Koranic *tawhīd*.

Porphyry had edited Plotinus' treatises according to a systematic model which was to be contained in three "volumes": the first to include *Enneads* I–III, the second *Enneads* IV–VI, and the third *Ennead* VI. The last two "volumes", which collected what Plotinus had written at different moments of his teaching on the Soul, the Intellect, and the One, brought together all his theological doctrine regarding the three hypostases.

As is known, the Arabic paraphrase of *Enneads* IV–VI is preserved in different works, namely the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*, a paraphrased selection from *Enneads* IV–VI translated by 'Abd al-Masiḥ ibn Nā'ima and corrected by al-Kindī,¹³⁵ the pseudo-Farabian *Letter on the Divine Science* (*Risāla fī l-'ilm al-ilāhī*), discovered by Kraus,¹³⁶ and the *Dicta sapientis graeci* discovered by Rosenthal.¹³⁷ The pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* was edited and translated into German by Dieterici at the end of the nineteenth century on the basis of three manuscripts (Berlin, *Staatsbibliothek*, Sprenger 741,¹³⁸ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ar. 2347,¹³⁹ and a manuscript of Tabriz whose shelfmark he does not specify).¹⁴⁰ All these three works that preserve the Arabic paraphrase of Plotinus' *Enneads* IV–VI were subsequently edited by Badawī.¹⁴¹ The *Letter on Divine Science*, with a partial translation into French, has been published also by

¹³⁵ Cf. above, Chapter I, note 173, 174.

¹³⁶ Cf. Kraus (1940–1941), 263–295.

¹³⁷ Cf. Rosenthal (1952), 461–492; Rosenthal (1953), 370–400; Rosenthal (1955), 42–65.

¹³⁸ Ms. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Sprenger 741 – dated ca. 1000H/1591; see the description in Ahlwardt (1892), 4: 446–47 no. 5121; cf. Lewis, (1959), xxix.

¹³⁹ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ar. 2347; see the description in MacGuckin De Slane, (1883–1895). Supplément, 411; Badawī (1955), *taṣḍīr* 45–47.

¹⁴⁰ Dieterici (1882): in the preface to his edition (v) Dieterici observes that the pseudo-*Theology* is the Arabic translation of a Greek work, "und dies Werk ist nicht aristotelisch, wenn es auch dem Aristoteles zugeschrieben wird, ist auch nicht platonisch, sondern von plotinischer Färbung". Then at page 182 Dieterici noticed the literal connection of the pseudo-*Theology* with some Plotinus' passages, which he believed were included in a Porphyrian treatise to which he traced back the pseudo-*Theology*. Krage (1986), 272 and Fenton (1986), 241, underline the fact that the Platonist Thomas Taylor (1758–1835) was the first to point out that the pseudo-*Theology* was a 'barbarized compilation' extracted from the *Enneads* of Plotinus in a *Dissertation* of 1812. But it was Valentin Rose [Rose (1883)] in his review of Dieterici's translation of the pseudo-*Theology* [Dieterici (1883)] who showed the textual correspondences between the two texts. On the history of studies on pseudo-*Theology* cf. D'Ancona (2003), 72–91; D'Ancona (2011), 135–195.

¹⁴¹ Badawī (1955).

Anawati.¹⁴² *The Sayings of the Greek Sage*, preserved in manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Marsh* 539; in the *Šiwān al-Hikma* by pseudo-Siğistānī; and in the *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal* of al-Šahrastānī, have been published by Rosenthal.¹⁴³ Francesco Gabrieli has recognized the Plotinian sources in 1946.¹⁴⁴ Lewis translated all this material into English which was placed as a parallel text to the Greek in Henry-Schwyzler's edition of Plotinus' *Enneads* published in 1959.¹⁴⁵ Since the Arabic substantially changes the flow of Plotinus' text, this implies that the original structure of the Arabic texts has been upset in order to have it corresponding to the Greek.

These works, which have reached us as three distinct texts, have lexical analogies and doctrinal adaptations which strongly suggest a common source. As Rosenthal has observed, the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* and the *Dicta sapientis graeci* overlap, and the identity of passages they have in common proves the existence of a larger work from which they both derived. The *Letter on the Divine Science* does not overlap with the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*. But it shares with the other *Plotiniana* not only the Greek substratum, but also the style both of Arabic expression and of paraphrase: this shows that they come from the same translator; the resemblance of the paraphrastic formula shows that they all come from the same.¹⁴⁶

Scholars have long debated the question of whether the pseudo-*Theology* was produced and attributed to Aristotle at the same time in which the Plotinian treatises were translated, namely in the context of the circle of al-Kindī,¹⁴⁷ or whether it was written at a later date. The first hypothesis implies the will to produce a forgery, since the translator of the *Enneads* could not have been unaware that the work he was translating was not by Aristotle. Against this hypothesis Zimmermann has maintained that the present organization of the text of the pseudo-*Theology* and its attribution to Aristotle are the effect of a process which took place in two phases: the treatises of Plotinus were initially translated and collected into a textbook of metaphysics, produced in the environment of

¹⁴² Anawati (1974), 155–221.

¹⁴³ Cf. above note 137.

¹⁴⁴ Gabrieli (1946), 338–346.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. above note 138.

¹⁴⁶ Zimmermann (1986), 113.

¹⁴⁷ D'Ancona (2003), 80, note 208, the Arabic translation of *Enneads corpus* dated back to 842. Al-Kindī dedicated his work, the *First Philosophy*, to the caliph al-Mu'tašim (r. 833–842) and the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* was corrected by al-Kindī for a son of the caliph, Aḥmad. Hence the Arabic translation of Plotinus' writings was made by 842, since al-Kindī used the Arabic *Plotinus* in the *First Philosophy*. Cf. Endress (1973); Endress (1997a), 43–76.

al-Kindī, which included Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Proclus; later on, several folios containing the translation-paraphrase of Plotinus were accidentally lost. Then again, they were randomly assembled, and the awareness of what this work had constituted was lost, including the idea that it followed Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and produced the *Theology of Aristotle*.¹⁴⁸ If there is unanimous acceptance of the role played by the circle of al-Kindī in the elaboration of this text, there is debate instead over the apparently chaotic nature of the present text due, according to the theory set out above, to the allegedly random ordering of the dispersed folios.

C. D'Ancona has pointed out that both in the first chapter of the pseudo-*Theology*, and in the chapters that follow it is possible to identify a clear plan to reorganize Plotinus' materials translated in Arabic. A crucial role is played in this by the prologue, which opens the work and gives its plan.¹⁴⁹ The aim of the work is to give an account of divine sovereignty (*al-rubūbiyya*), that is to say, rational theology, whose contents follow a systematic order imposed by the ontological dignity of the realities under examination. They are, in order: God, the First Cause, above eternity and time, the cause of causes, their creator; the potency of the First Cause which extends to the intellect, and through the intellect to the soul, through the soul to nature, and through nature to generable and corruptible things; the transmission of this potency of the First Cause through intellect without movement, since movement is produced by the intellect in the form of desire (*šawq*) and tension (*nuzūʿ*).¹⁵⁰ The theological doctrine set out therefore resolves itself into a coherent explanation of divine causality according to a fairly recognizable order, the same on which, as we have seen, the *Liber de causis* had been constructed. From an examination of the highest thing closest to God, the intellect (i), we move on to that of the universal soul (ii), and sublunar nature (iii), to arrive at that of the individual souls (iv). If, examined from the point of view of the title and their position, the chapters of the pseudo-*Theology* certainly do not follow the order announced in the prologue, but from the point of view of their contents, on the other hand, we find that theme i. announced in the prologue is dealt with in the fourth chapter of the *Theology*, theme ii. in the eighth, and theme iv. in chapters one and seven. The *Theology* must therefore be reconsidered in its intentions, because on careful analysis it

¹⁴⁸ Zimmermann (1986), 110–240.

¹⁴⁹ D'Ancona (2001), 78–112. D'Ancona (2003), 77–91; D'Ancona (2011), 139–180.

¹⁵⁰ Badawī (1955), 6.7–12.

seems to follow an editorial plan. The prologue helps us in part because, by following it, we can reconstruct the main themes with respect to which the author of the *Theology* organized the material taken from Plotinus. The effective order of the chapters, on the other hand, seems at the same time to testify to the fact that the plan to reorganize Plotinus' material failed in some way, probably because of the difficulty of the contents and the completely inverse organization in which they are found in Porphyry's edition (from the soul to the One). Instead, the plan of the prologue is carried out in the *Liber de causis*: Proclus' *Elements of Theology* in fact offered ready-made doctrinal units, the propositions, already structured according to the order One-intellect-soul. The Arabic Plotinus has already undergone doctrinal and terminological adjustments, therefore, in the first phase of its translation-paraphrase.

To complicate this picture of the origins of the Arabic Plotinus, on an aspect about which there is no scholarly consensus, some passages of Isma'īlī inspiration were added to the pseudo-*Theology*.¹⁵¹ The so-called 'Longer Version' derived from this addition is preserved in some Judeo-Arabic fragments and it seems to be reflected in the Latin translation.¹⁵²

The first scholar to discover the Longer Version was the Russian Andrei Iakovlevič Borisov, who published in 1930 a study on three ancient and fragmentary manuscripts of the pseudo-*Theology* which he had found in Leningrad in the Firkovich collection of the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library. The text of pseudo-*Theology* surviving in these three manuscripts was different and longer compared to that presented by Dieterici in his edition, and had a kinship to the Latin translation. Borisov concluded that the Longer Version was the original recension of the text and that the philosopher al-Kindī was responsible for the abridgement of the text purified of all the material of a Christian nature developed into the previous Syriac tradition.¹⁵³ Since Borisov's discovery, scholars have underlined the importance of including the Leningrad recension in the critical edition of the *Theology* – a *desideratum* both for Classical and Arabic philosophical studies which will hopefully be met¹⁵⁴ – as well as the need to

¹⁵¹ Cf. below note 155.

¹⁵² Cf. Kraye (1986); Aouad (1989), 564–570.

¹⁵³ Borisov (1930), 83–98. Cf. Pines (1954), 7–20; Fenton (1986), 241–264; Aouad (1989), 564–68; Starkova (2002); Treiger (2007), 159–195.

¹⁵⁴ The ERC project Ideas, Advanced Grant 249431 "Greek into Arabic. Philosophical Concepts and Linguistic Bridges" will produce the critical edition of the pseudo-*Theology* of Aristotle. See the website at <http://www.greekintoarabic.eu>.

clarify the nature of the additional materials to this version which have no parallel in the *Enneads*.

Examining the nature of these interpolations, Pines noticed that there is a doctrine, that of the Word (*al-kalima*) – God's command, common to the teachings of the Isma'īlīs, and that this doctrine was the most notable feature which distinguished the Longer Version from the other. He concluded that the interpolations had been added by an Isma'īlī compiler or by a member of the philosophical school from which the Isma'īlīs had derived their theological doctrines.¹⁵⁵

Stern observed that some passages of the Longer Version devoted to the theory of emanation were similar to some passages of the works of Ishāq Isrā'īlī, the ninth-tenth century Jewish philosopher, and to the final part of an ethical work written by Abraham ibn Ḥasday (ca. 1250). Stern suggested a Neoplatonic source for all these texts.¹⁵⁶

Fenton has discovered several unidentified Arabic fragments of the Longer Version in the Genizah manuscripts preserved in Oxford and New York.¹⁵⁷ Analyzing the text in his masterful study *The Arabic and Hebrew Versions of the Theology of Aristotle* he points out that the interpolations and additional pages of the Longer Version were not a later commentary "inadvertently slipped into the text by an unscrupulous scribe, for one encounters, deftly woven into the text, spurious references, absent in the Shorter Version, to what the author, i.e. Aristotle, has already explained in his others works, the *Metaphysics*, *De Anima* and *De Caelo*. These references would have the effect, whether intended or not, of increasing the reader's belief in the authenticity of the work".¹⁵⁸

Concerning the doctrines set out in these interpolations, Fenton distinguishes new doctrines like that of the Word; doctrines common to the Longer and Shorter versions like the timelessness of the supernal world; Porphyrian doctrines like that of the *docta ignorantia*, the theory

¹⁵⁵ Pines (1954), 7–20. On the Isma'īlī evidence of the Longer Version, Zimmermann (1986), 129 suggests that it is easier to imagine that al-Nasafī (d. 942), apparently the first to have recast Isma'īlī cosmology in a Neoplatonic mould in his lost work, imbibed the doctrine of the Longer Version, than that **Theology* (*K?*; *K* = the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*) first neoplatonized Isma'īlism in order to be Isma'īlified by an Isma'īlī Neoplatonist (al-Nasafī?). Zimmermann writes: "if Nasafī used *L* (Longer Version), both *L* and *K* must have existed by the early tenth century. But if the editor of *L* was on the contrary inspired by, or identical with, Nasafī, *L* must (and *K* may) have come into being only after Isma'īlism had come under the sway of the **Theology*. [...] The question whether *L* was the source or the product of Isma'īlī Neoplatonism remains".

¹⁵⁶ Stern (1960–61), 58–120.

¹⁵⁷ Fenton (1986), 246–249.

¹⁵⁸ Fenton (1986), 250.

of knowledge by resemblance and the denial of metempsychosis; doctrines of other origins like “the Platonic idea that the soul strengthens after the age of forty on account of the subsidence of corporeal passions or that God sows all things within the Intellect”; theological doctrines like that of the Divine attributes.¹⁵⁹ From all these doctrinal elements Fenton advances the hypothesis of different compositional levels. The parts which show an affinity with the *Enneads* may derive from the Greek text translated into Arabic and then probably edited by al-Kindī. But he remarks:

None the less a large amount of the additional material of the Longer Version [...] is internally cohesive as a doctrine, while basically foreign in both style and thought to the rest of the text. It was probably woven into the work by an adept of some Neoplatonic doctrine, who was eager to promote these teachings through a pseudepigraphic expedient. In view of the Islamic vocabulary and thematic, such as a heavy insistence on the creation of the world in time *ex nihilo* as well as a Kalāmīc discussion on Divine Attributes, it is unlikely that they were transposed at the Syriac stage; moreover, there is nothing in the additional material that betrays a Syriac intermediary. Consequently it would not be too rash to conclude that they were the work of some Islamic circle strongly influenced by the Neoplatonic schools of late Antiquity. In view of the presence of very similar doctrines amongst philosophers and mystics of the ninth-tenth centuries, at which time it would seem these ideas were largely in vogue, it is not unlikely that the interpolations were made at some time in this period.¹⁶⁰

Concerning the identification of these Neoplatonic circles of the ninth-tenth century, Fenton agrees with Pines’ conclusions whereby certain Isma‘īlī scholars endeavoured to reconcile the tenets of Greek philosophy with those of revealed religion: the text of pseudo *Theology of Aristotle*, adapted to their doctrines, would have been a key tool for their project. Besides he takes into account the presence, observed by Stern, of a Jewish source for the additional materials of the Longer Version. The presence of Neoplatonic materials in the writings of Jewish philosophers of the period like Ishāq Isrā‘īlī (ca. 850–950), physician at the court of the first Fatimids, or his disciple Dunaš ben Tamīm, suggests that contemporary to the great Isma‘īlī empire, Isrā‘īlī or some other Jewish philosopher might have become acquainted with this Neoplatonic literature which, due to its appeal and kinship to Isma‘īlī doctrines, probably circulated in Fatimid circles. It is not impossible that “a school of Jewish thinkers was

¹⁵⁹ Fenton (1986), 250–54.

¹⁶⁰ Fenton (1986), 254–55.

responsible for the expanded version of the *Theology*.¹⁶¹ Fenton points out that in all the margins of both the Leningrad and Oxford manuscripts of the Longer Version there are scribal glosses which refer to Biblical concepts in an attempt to understand the *Theology* in terms of the Jewish Biblical tradition.¹⁶² Moreover, all the thirty-seven manuscripts in which the Longer Version has survived are Jewish in origin (only six are Judeo-Arabic): they originated from the Cairo Genizah attached to the Ben 'Ezra synagogue of Old Cairo, and they probably date from the century following the end of the Isma'īlī empire. Hence, according to Fenton, the Longer Version was fostered in the Fatimid era (969–1171) in Egypt, and it was reworked in that and the subsequent century in a Jewish intellectual circle of Neoplatonists.¹⁶³

If this suggestion is correct, it is not surprising that the only Muslim author known to have quoted the Longer Version is 'Abd al-Laṭīf who based his paraphrase of the *Theology* on the Longer Version, which he probably found in a Jewish circle of Cairo which he frequented – he refers to his meeting with Maimonides¹⁶⁴ – during his stay in Egypt.¹⁶⁵

The three chapters of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* devoted to the paraphrase of the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 179v30–187r9; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 154.14–178.15) are particularly complex. They follow two crucial chapters of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's treatise. In chapter twenty, he had presented the object of the *falsafa al-ilāhīyya*, namely the hierarchy of intelligible realities according to their degree of ontological dignity, and had identified this science with the science of divine sovereignty (*'ilm al-rubūbiyya*), that is to say, that science which investigates the causal action proper to the First Cause. In chapter twenty-one, he had set out the doctrines regarding divine causality. This chapter is entitled *On the Theology That is the Science of Divine Sovereignty (Fī Uṭūlūġiyā wa-huwa 'ilm al-rubūbiyya)*: in it the One is presented as First Cause and Pure Being, above eternity and time, source of unity in multiple things, superordinate to all the sensible and intelligible realities. It is the principle whose causal power extends to the sublunar world by means of the second cause, namely nature. It is the first and absolute intellect in

¹⁶¹ Fenton (1986), 255.

¹⁶² Fenton (1986), 263, note 85.

¹⁶³ Fenton (1981), 4–19.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Chapter II, above 129–131, 178.

¹⁶⁵ Badawī (1955), 65–66; on 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's possible knowledge of Hebrew script cf. Fenton (1981), 65; Chapter II, above 130–131.

which thinking and being thought coincide, supreme degree of being which is followed by the Forms, the spiritual realities, and the material bodies. As Badawī has noticed, in spite of its title, chapter 21 is not a paraphrase of the *Theology*, but, as we have seen, a synthesis of Platonic, Peripatetic and Neoplatonic doctrines as they were intermingled in the Arabic Islamic *falsafa*.¹⁶⁶

In chapter 22, entitled *More on Theology (Fī Utūlūǧīyā ayḍan)*, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf summarized the text of the pseudo-*Theology* starting from *mīmar* 2 and follows the text more or less literally till half-way through *mīmar* 9. Badawī had suggested that in this chapter ‘Abd al-Laṭīf quotes the Longer Version of the pseudo-*Theology* since he refers, for example, to the doctrine of the Word, absent in the Shorter Version.¹⁶⁷ Having at his disposal the integral text of the Longer Version, Fenton has demonstrated that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf in his chapter 22 quotes the Longer Version five times. See below the table of correspondences: in the first

Latin version (Rome, 1519)	Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols	Ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad</i> <i>Taymūr Pāšā</i> , <i>Ḥikma</i> 117, pp.	Badawī (1955)	Fenton Ms 10, fols
8r-9v	179v32-33	154.16-17	209.4-5 ¹⁶⁸	18r1-2
18v25-19r11	180r29-33	156.6-11	211.9-14 ¹⁶⁹	35v8-15
24v27-30	180v20-21	157.13-15	212.21-22 ¹⁷⁰	41r6-7
31r20-26	181r17-20	158.25-159.4	214.20-215.3 ¹⁷¹	58(?) ¹⁷² 3-8
37v1-5	181v15-16	160.16-18	217.3-5	67r2-8

¹⁶⁶ Badawī (1955), 43.

¹⁶⁷ Badawī (1955), 216, note 3. Cf. ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol 181v8-12; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā*, *Ḥikma* 117, p. 160.9-13.

¹⁶⁸ Badawī (1955), 209, note 3 suggests the Long Version as the possible source of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baǧdādī’s text. In this passage we find the topic of God creating the intellect and sowing all the things within it. Cf. Fenton (1986), 253-254 and note 73.

¹⁶⁹ The idea expressed in the passage is that everything moves in an attempt to assimilate the First Being from which everything receives its own being.

¹⁷⁰ In this passage we find the theme of the soul intermediate between sense and intellect.

¹⁷¹ The theme is that of the human soul knowing the difference between good and evil so that man can be considered the noblest creature that can attain perfection as a result of the presence of the intellect in him, even if he is deeply involved in the corporeal reality as if he were in prison.

¹⁷² Fenton (1986), 263 does not give the indication of r or v for this fol.

column the reference is to the Latin Version of the pseudo-*Theology*, in the second and the third columns there are the references to 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's quotations of the Longer Version in the two mss. of his text, in the fourth column there are the correspondences in Badawī's edition, and in the last column there are Fenton's indications of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's quotations of the Longer Version in his *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*.

In chapter 23, entitled *On Theology (Fī Utūlūġiyā)*, 'Abd al-Laṭīf initially refers to the myth of Atlantis from Plato's *Timaeus* (*Tim.* 21 A–25 E). A long reference to the first book of the *Timaeus* also opens the following chapter (24).¹⁷³ As well-known, we do not have an Arabic translation of the *Timaeus* as such. We have Galen's epitome of the *Timaeus*,¹⁷⁴ translated into Arabic by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, and some Arabic fragments from Galen's *Medical Theory in the Timaeus*,¹⁷⁵ a commentary in four sections, the first of which translated by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and sections 2–4 by Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn. But the problem is that 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's references to Plato's dialogue do not seem to come from Galen's epitome¹⁷⁶ nor from Galen's *Medical Theory in the Timaeus* – as far as we can know the text, since it only appears in a fragmentary way.¹⁷⁷

We know of the Arabic tradition of Plato's dialogues and on the *Timaeus* from the *Fihrist*, which first presents a list of Plato's books from a certain Theon, who has been identified with Theon of Smyrna. Then the *Fihrist* presents another list, taken from different sources, which includes also various spurious titles. The author of the *Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm, mentions

¹⁷³ Cf. Zimmermann (1986), 149; Arnzen (2011), 230, table 5; in Plotinus' *Enneads* there are several quotations and paraphrases of the *Timaeus* which were incorporated into the *Arabic Plotiniana*, but there is not the passage on the myth of Atlantis mentioned by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī in Chapter 23, nor the reference to the first book of the *Timaeus* of Chapter 24.

¹⁷⁴ Galeni *Compendium Timaei Platonis aliorumque dialogorum synopsis qua extant fragmenta* Kraus–Walzer (1951).

¹⁷⁵ Galeni *De his quae medice scripta sunt in Timaeo*, ed. H.O. Schröder and P. Kahle, CMG, Suppl. I (1934).

¹⁷⁶ Cf. the short reference to the myth of Atlantis in Galen's epitome edited by Kraus–Walzer, (1951), 3.4–6, and the more detailed reference to the same myth in 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's text: Badawī (1955), 221.1–3.

¹⁷⁷ The extant fragments can be related to three main sections of the *Timaeus*: i. 41 A–46 B; ii. 59 E – 68 D; iii. 76 D–91 C: cf. Arnzen (2011), 222–227. On the other extant materials on the *Timaeus* in the Arabic tradition and the literal or close to literal Arabic fragments of this Plato's dialogue see Arnzen (2011), 226–231, 232–257. Unfortunately no one of the fragments of the *Timaeus* collected by Arnzen deals with the passage mentioned by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī.

the catalogue of manuscripts of Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī, his contemporary and friend, as his source for this second part.

The list from Theon has little in common with those known to us from the Greek lists of Plato’s dialogues: it is different from the order in tetralogies set out by Thrasyllus, from the order in trilogies attributed to Aristophanes of Byzantium, from the order of the so-called ‘short list’ of the prologue of Albinus, and is also different from the Neoplatonic canon of reading Plato’s dialogues. The second list – as Arnzen remarks in his recent masterful study on the Arabic tradition of the *Timaeus* – seems to be derived from Thrasyllus or Albinus: “Ibn al-Nadīm mentions the dialogue Critias, just like these two Greek authors, under the title *Atlanticus*”.¹⁷⁸

In the first list it is said that the *Timaeus* was corrected (*aṣṣlaḥa-hū*) by Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī. In the second list it is said that the *Timaeus* was subdivided in three chapters; that it was translated by Yaḥyā ibn al-Biṭrīq (*naqala-hū*) and also by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (*wa-naqala-hū*); or that Ḥunayn corrected the translation (*aw aṣṣlaḥa*) by Ibn al-Biṭrīq.¹⁷⁹ We are told about the nature of Ibn al-Biṭrīq’s translation of the *Timaeus* by the historian al-Mas‘ūdī in the *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l-Iṣrāf*:

Plato describes the hierarchy of the (spiritual and physical) worlds in the metaphysical treatise translated by Yaḥyā ibn al-Biṭrīq, which is known under the title of *Timaeus* – the one in three books addressed to his pupil Timaeus, not the medical (*tibbī*) *Timaeus* in which Plato describes the genesis of the physical world and what it contains (*kawn al-‘alam al-ṭabī‘i wa-mā fī-hi*), shapes, colours, their composition and contrasts, etc. The latter was explained (*ṣaraḥa-hū*) by Galen and expounded (*wa-fassara-hū*) by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq. He says that the first and second quires are missing. His translation is in four books.¹⁸⁰

Commenting on this passage, Zimmermann has noticed that Yaḥyā ibn al-Biṭrīq’s translation is being contrasted with a “conflation” of Galen’s *Medical Theory in the Timaeus* and Galen’s epitome of the *Timaeus*. In fact the words *kawn al-‘alam al-ṭabī‘i wa-mā fī-hi* occur at the beginning of Galen’s epitome¹⁸¹ and the description which follows agrees more readily with what Ḥunayn tells us about the *Medical Theory*:¹⁸² for example the

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Arnzen (2011), 181–267, 188. See the differences of Plato’s list of works in al-Mas‘ūdī, in Ibn al-Qiftī and Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a ibidem, 188–198.

¹⁷⁹ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, 245,26–246,24 Flügel; 306,13–307,8 Taḡaddud.

¹⁸⁰ Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Mas‘ūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l-Iṣrāf*, 162,15–163,5 de Goeje. English translation in Zimmermann (1986), 150.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Galeni *Compendium Timaei Platonis*, 3,2 (Arabic text) Kraus–Walzer.

¹⁸² Bergsträsser (1925), 41: §122, §124.

division into four books. “Now”, writes Zimmermann, “the *Timaeus* proper is naturally not the same as an epitome of it by Galen, and a translation by Ibn al-Biṭrīq is not the same as one by Ḥunayn. But Mas‘ūdī is also saying that the *Timaeus* translated by Ibn al-Biṭrīq is not the *Timaeus* underlying Galen’s epitome as translated by Ḥunayn. But that is the *Timaeus* we know. Hence if Mas‘ūdī is right, Ibn al-Biṭrīq’s version was not of the *Timaeus* at all, or rather it was not exactly a translation. Perhaps it was so free an adaptation as not to appear to represent the same work as Galen’s epitome”.¹⁸³ Zimmermann ends his argument by suggesting that Ibn al-Biṭrīq’s version could be the source behind the mysterious references to the *Timaeus* in ‘Abd al-Latīf al-Baġdādī’s chapters 23–24.

Zimmermann’s argument is highly speculative and we cannot assume that any Arabic reference to the *Timaeus* which has no correspondence in Galen’s *Medical Theory in the Timaeus* and Galen’s epitome of the *Timaeus* must derive from Ibn al-Biṭrīq’s version. In fact, as Arnzen has demonstrated in his preliminary compilation of literal Arabic quotations of *Timaeus*,¹⁸⁴ the Arabic fragments of this Plato’s dialogue “stem, not from an integral Arabic translation of the *Timaeus*, but rather from various Arabic sources dealing with the *Timaeus* in a great variety of accuracy, comprehensiveness and intensity”.¹⁸⁵

‘Abd al-Latīf then starts to paraphrase the text of the pseudo-*Theology* again, till its end, more freely than he did in the previous chapter. In this chapter he quotes once again the Longer Version:

Latin version (Rome, 1519)	Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols	Ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr</i> <i>Pāšā, Hikma</i> 117, pp.	Badawī (1955)	Fenton Ms 10, fols
20r25–28	183r20–22	165.24–166.1	224. 7–9	36v17–20

¹⁸³ As I mentioned above at page 37, in his recent impressive study on *Plato’s Timaeus in the Arabic Tradition* Arnzen goes further and suggests that we may be quite certain that the tripartite translation attributed to Ibn al-Biṭrīq was made from a Middle Platonic paraphrase and epitome of the *Timaeus* (such as those by Eudorus, Arius Didymus and Poseidonius or the Neopythagorean *Περὶ φύσιος κόσμου καὶ ψυχῆς* attributed to Timaeus Locrus) or, more probably, from later *hypomnēmata* on the *Timaeus* (such as those composed by Calvenus Taurus and Porphyry): cf. Arnzen (2011), 202–206.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Arnzen (2011), 232–257.

¹⁸⁵ Arnzen (2011), 232.

In chapter 24, entitled *On What Remains of the Discourse on Theology* (*Fī baqīyat al-kalām fī Utūlūğiyā*), as we have said above ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Bağdādī, starts with a spurious reference to the first book of Plato’s *Timaeus*. His intention is not to provide a systematic treatment of the One, the hierarchy of the intelligible realities and divine causality for the third time. What he wants to do is to offer a long series of corollaries and clarifications to the doctrines set out above. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf had adopted the same procedure in chapter fifteen, at the end of the three chapters devoted to *Lambda*, where he had gone back to and further specified a whole series of concepts already set out previously. This would explain the chaotic succession of subjects set out in the last chapter: brief paragraphs which treat different arguments with apparently no order. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf writes about the process of emanation; the nature and movement of the celestial bodies which move out of the desire to imitate the perfection of the First Immobile Mover and to assimilate themselves to the Pure Good to the extent to which they are capable; the movement of the first sphere and the life in the world of coming to be; the ontological anteriority of the First Cause with respect to the proximate causes. We find a saying ascribed to Socrates according to which the Creator is the beginning and the end of all the things. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf recalls the analogy between the world of divine sovereignty and the natural world (cf. *Timaeus* 29 E–31 B) as a gift of God who is provident towards every part of the universe and the fact that the celestial bodies are divine. We find the opinion ascribed to Plato about creation *ex nihilo* – out of his perfection, the Creator is the cause of the existence of all the other existents through emanation, and a doctrine ascribed to Empedocles according to which one single cause produces only one single effect. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf writes about the ascent from sensible to intellectual knowledge and he presents a description of the First Principle, True One, and Creator, who is known only through imperfect images and who is infinite in its essence. In addition, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf mentions the ascent of human soul to the First Principle, which is true intellect, true being, true perfection, true science and true substance; a description of the hierarchy of the different worlds from the First Principle to the world of coming to be; the description of God according to the Islamic tradition with a reference to *Koran* 42,11 (*Counsel*). At the end we find the description of the limits of our senses and of the human intellect in understanding the First Cause and the others separate beings: our intellect is weak in understanding concepts such as movement, time, matter, privation, and possibility, and it can attain them only through analogies

and long meditation. Moreover for our intellect, the First Principle is the condition of knowing without being known by us, as the sun is the condition of our vision without being seen by us.¹⁸⁶ The chapter and the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* ends with the announcement of a treatise on political philosophy to follow, entitled *The Conditions of the Perfect State and its Consequences* (*Aḥwāl al-madīna al-fāḍila wa mā yatba'ū dālika*):¹⁸⁷ if people are educated to grew up in virtues it will be possible to realize *al-madīna al-fāḍila*, the perfect state (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 187r 2–8; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 178.5–12). Zimmermann has suggested a reference to the *Mabādī' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* by Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī an author that, as we have seen, 'Abd al-Laṭīf proves to know very well.¹⁸⁸

This overview of the reception and use of the Greek and Arabic sources by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī in his *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* raises serious doubts about the theory that 'Abd al-Laṭīf is the exponent *par excellence* of that philosophical current which developed between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the Muslim East, and which, in reaction to the imposition of Avicenna's philosophy, proclaimed the need to return to the Aristotelian sources.

The return to Aristotle, declared by 'Abd al-Laṭīf to be necessary in his biography,¹⁸⁹ was certainly not a return to the Aristotle of the Greek sources, linguistic access to which had by that time been lost for a couple of centuries. Rather it was a return to the Aristotle of his own tradition: that strongly Neoplatonized Aristotle of the origins of the Kindian *falsafa*. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's treatise on metaphysics is in fact deeply rooted in the whole set of Greek works on first philosophy that had been translated or paraphrased into Arabic under the impulse and direction of al-Kindī. It should be remembered that according to Zimmermann, it is from an examination of the work of 'Abd al-Laṭīf that we can reconstruct what he calls 'Kindī's metaphysics file',¹⁹⁰ which included Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, the *Fī mabādī' al-kull* and the *De Providentia* of Alexander of

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Badawī (1955), 230–240.

¹⁸⁷ In Ibn Abi Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, II. 212.34 Müller, among 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's works there is the *Maqālatān fī al-madīna al-fāḍila*, the *Two treatises on the Perfect State*.

¹⁸⁸ Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Mabādī' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* Walzer, (1985); cf. Zimmermann (1986), 182.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. above Chapter II, p. 173.

¹⁹⁰ Zimmermann (1986), 113.

Aphrodisias, the *Liber de causis*, Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, and the last three of Plotinus' *Enneads*.

The homogeneity of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's choice of sources with the "editorial" choices of the circle directed by al-Kindī amounts a clear exegetical coherence of the metaphysical doctrine he presents with the same project elaborated, at the beginning of the *falsafa*, by al-Kindī and his circle. In this project, in which the knowledge of the causes comes to coincide with a natural theology that investigates the First Principle, the *De Providentia* of Alexander of Aphrodisias, the *Liber de causis*, Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, and the last three of Plotinus' *Enneads* constitute a natural development of book *Lambda* of the *Metaphysics*.

The First Immobile Mover and perfect principle of *Lambda* is understood as the True One which makes all things exist by creation, through its providence. Thanks to his attempt to find a harmony between the Aristotelian and the Neoplatonic doctrines concerning the First Principle, al-Kindī was able to formulate a philosophy that reconciled religious faith in a First Truth (*al-Ḥaqq al-Awwal*), one of the names given to God in the Koran, with knowledge understood in an Aristotelian way as the search for the cause.

Nevertheless, in writing his treatise on the metaphysical science, 'Abd al-Laṭīf made his own not only the main tenets of the *falsafa* in its formative phase, but also other exegetical contributions and other philosophical reflections. For example, he is indebted to the Themistius' doctrine reflected also in the *Exposition of Lambda* by Ṭābit ibn Qurra: attributing thought to the One allows the superimposition of the characteristics of the Neoplatonic One with those of the Aristotelian immobile First Mover, and, accordingly this offers a philosophical foundation to the doctrine of divine providence.

Therefore, I cannot subscribe to those judgements which confine 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, and with him the school tradition of which he was a product and a spokesman, to the role of the sterile compiler of disparate material, nor is it correct in my opinion to affirm that he unconsciously falls back into the Kindian model. In the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* the "theologizing" reading of the *Metaphysics* of al-Kindī and the "ontologizing" reading typical of al-Fārābī are present side by side.

3. *The Structure of the Work: the Metaphysical Model of al-Fārābī*

As we have seen before, 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* is a compilation of several texts. Zimmermann asks himself

whether 'Abd al-Laṭīf was "under the illusion that all the texts underlying his epitome were by Aristotle". He thinks that it is impossible because some of these texts circulated under the names of authors other than Aristotle. However 'Abd al-Laṭīf accepted "the notion that Alexander and Proclus (as well as Plotinus) were exponents of an Aristotelian theology. Alexander, of course, did indeed endeavour to expound the views of Aristotle, and often said so too. Proclus, it is true, was more of a Platonist than had been Aristotle, but it is truer still that he was more of an Aristotelian than had been Plato; and so was Plotinus. Both of them could pass as exponents of an Aristotelian theology as long as one believed in the ultimate unity of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy, as Farabi had maintained one should. Baġdādi was a professed admirer of Farabi".¹⁹¹ The idea is that, following al-Fārābī, 'Abd al-Laṭīf thought that the views expounded in the texts other than Aristotle's texts were generally known to be Aristotle's. In a way that must be analyzed 'Abd al-Laṭīf seems to be strongly influenced by al-Fārābī.

In this section I will attempt to clarify the structure within which the sources used in the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* were assembled by 'Abd al-Laṭīf so that together they might constitute a systematic exposition of what is to be understood by metaphysical science. The structure on which 'Abd al-Laṭīf built the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* reflects the epistemological indications presented by al-Fārābī in two distinct works,¹⁹² namely *The Aims of the Metaphysics* (*Fī aġrād mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*),¹⁹³ and in the *Enumeration of the Sciences* (*Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm*).¹⁹⁴ These two works, read contiguously, provide the framework of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*.

The fact that 'Abd al-Laṭīf knew the systematization of the sciences and of *falsafa* presented by al-Fārābī is beyond doubt. Not only, as we have seen before,¹⁹⁵ did our author, after his rediscovery of the philosophy of the Peripatetic tradition in Cairo, reconstruct it in a given

¹⁹¹ Zimmermann (1986), 180–81.

¹⁹² I follow the suggestion of Zimmermann (1986), 181 according to which 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādi divided the *Kitāb fī 'ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* "into the three parts which, according to al-Fārābī, make up the science of metaphysics (things and their accidents, the principle of science, and the hierarchy of immaterial beings)". Neuwirth (1976), 3 was the first to propose this division of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*.

¹⁹³ The *Fī aġrād mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* (*The Aims of the Metaphysics*) is also known as *On the Aims of the Philosopher in Each of the Books of the Work Named Thanks to the Letters* (*Fī aġrād al-Ḥakīm fī kull maqāla min al-kitāb al-mawsūm bi-l-Ḥurūf*). Cf. Chapter I, note 337.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Chapter I, note 325.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. above, Chapter II, 131–133.

order,¹⁹⁶ but in the *muqaddima* that introduces the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* ‘Abd al-Laṭīf quotes both of al-Fārābī’s works quoted above.¹⁹⁷

In the introduction to *The Aims of the Metaphysics* al-Fārābī remarks that the ancient commentaries on the *Metaphysics* are rare and that the work has often been misunderstood, since many people in the past believed that the intention of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* was to discuss the Creator, intellect, and soul. *Metaphysics*, however, cannot be assimilated *tout court* to rational theology, even less to the science of the *tawhīd*, the Muslim apologetics. *Metaphysics* is the universal science of that which is common to all beings and therefore also of that principle common to all beings which we designate as God. Al-Fārābī proposes, therefore, to clarify the relationship between metaphysical science, rational theology or theodicy, and *kalām* (Islamic dialectic theology).

He then examines all the books of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, with the exception of *Alpha Elatton*, which is united with *Alpha Meizon*, and books *M* and *N*, which he believes together constitute the twelfth book.¹⁹⁸ Al-Fārābī writes:¹⁹⁹

In this treatise we wish to indicate the underlying aim of the work of Aristotle known by the name of *Metaphysics*, as well as its principal subdivisions. In fact many people without knowing have become convinced that the contents of this work and its object are to speak of the Creator – may He be praised and exalted – the intellect, the soul, and all other related themes. They have even imagined that the metaphysical science and the science of the *tawhīd* are one and the same. For this reason it seems to us that most of those who study metaphysics are totally confused and deceive themselves. It seems to us that most of the things that have been said take no account of such an aim. Indeed we have not found anything devoted to this intention if not that which concerns the eleventh book which is known by the letter *lām*. Moreover there is no commentary among the Ancients devoted to this work as happens, on the other hand, for the rest of his works. If something is found, it is merely for book *lām*. This is an incomplete commentary by Alexander and another complete commentary by Themistius. As for the other books, either they simply were not commented on or they have not

¹⁹⁶ He follows, in order, the thought of Aristotle, that of Alexander of Aphrodisias and that of Themistius, and he made it culminate in the speculation of al-Fārābī. Cf. above, Chapter II, 131–133.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. above 214–217.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. above Chapter I, note 338.

¹⁹⁹ Unfortunately neither of the two editions – by Dieterici (1890) and the anonymous Hyderabad (1926) – of the *Fī aḡrād mā ba’d al-ṭabī’a* by al-Fārābī is entirely satisfactory, as Druart (1982), 39 and Gutas (1988), 240, have observed in their translations of the text. In my translation I follow the text which Druart translates with the variations she introduces. Cf. the English translation in McGinnis–Reisman (2007), 78–81.

been preserved up until our time. It might be thought that this is the case, since we read in the works of the late Peripatetics that Alexander had commented on this work in its entirety. As for us, we wish to indicate the aim of this work as well as the contents of each of its books.

Among the sciences some are particular and others universal. The particular sciences have as their subject certain beings and certain concepts and they study the accidents proper to them. For example, physics studies certain beings, namely bodies in as far as they are in motion, change, cease to be in motion, and in so far as there are some principles for them and some qualities conforming to them [...]. But none (of the particular sciences) studies that which is common to all beings.

As for the universal science, it studies that which is common to all beings, such as existence and unity, their species and their consequent properties, and again the things that are not accidents of any of the subjects of the particular sciences, such as priority and posteriority, potency and act, perfection and privation, and so on. It studies the principle common to all beings which is that which must be designated by the name God – may His sovereignty be honoured. The fact that the universal science is one is because, if we had two universal sciences, each one would have its own subject. Every science that has its own subject, distinct from the subject of another science, is a particular science. Then the two sciences would both be particular and this is absurd. Therefore there is one universal science. Divine science (*'ilm al-ilāhī*) necessarily falls under this science because God is the principle of being in general and not of one certain being and not another. The part of this science that supplies the principles of being must be divine science because these questions are non proper to the *Physics*, in so far as they are more elevated in universality than they are; this science is therefore more elevated than the *Physics* and it is therefore called the science of that which comes after the *Physics* [...].

Hence the science that alone deserves to be called by this name (metaphysics) is this science. Indeed it alone, distinct from all the other sciences, is the metaphysical science. The first subject of this science is being in an absolute sense and that which is equivalent to it in universality, namely the one. But since the science of contraries is also one, this science also studies non-being and multiplicity. Moreover, after determining these objects, this science studies the things that function as species, like the ten categories of being and the species of the one, like the individual one, the one according to species, the one according to genus, and the one by analogy, and hence the divisions of each of these. This science studies in the same way the species of non-being and multiplicity. And again it studies the consequent properties of being like potency and act, perfection and privation, cause and effect. It studies, furthermore, the consequent properties of unity such as quiddity, similarity, equality, conformity, equivalence, analogy, and so on. Then, the science of contraries examines the consequent properties of non-being and multiplicity. It studies the principles of every thing, divides them and distinguishes them until it comes to the objects of the particular sciences. This science finally culminates in setting out the principles of all the

particular sciences and the definition of their objects. Here you have all the things investigated by this science.

The first book of this work constitutes a kind of beginning and synopsis; in it, it is explained that all the species of causes terminate in the dominion of a First Cause.

The second book contains a list of the difficult questions in these fields and the explanation what kind of difficulties they are. It also contains the construction of the opposite arguments which refer to them with the aim of predisposing the soul to this type of research and condition.

The third book contains a list of the subjects of this science, that is to say, the concepts which it studies just as their accidents – namely those that we have listed (above).

The fourth book contains a classification of all that which is indicated by means of every expression which refers to the subjects of this science, the species of its subjects, and their consequent properties, which is either by synonymy, or by amphibology, or by true homonymy.

The fifth book contains an explanation of the essential divisions that separate the three theoretical sciences, namely the natural and the mathematical sciences, and the divine science. There are only three of these sciences. This book determines the fact that the divine science is part of this science, but it is only this science in a certain respect. Its task in fact is to study quiddity which is known as such by essence and not by accident. It explains how this science is associated with dialectics and the art of the sophists.

The sixth book contains the determination of quiddity which is called essence and in particular substantiality. It classifies the types of substance that are: matter, form, and the composite of the two. It thus determines the true definition if we are dealing with beings, and hence, on that account, for all being if we are dealing with substance, and hence, thus for all substance. It explains how a form and matter composite is defined and what the parts of its definition are. It also explains which forms are separate and which are not and to what the same genus of existence does not belong.

The seventh book contains a summary of the previous books and the end of a passage on the Platonic forms, and it shows that generated things in no way depend on the forms for their generation. It determines the definitions of separate things because they have a real existence. Their definitions are their essences.

The eighth book deals with potency and act, and their relationship of priority and posteriority.

The ninth book speaks of the one, the multiple, the other, and the different and the contrary.

The tenth book distinguishes the principles of this science from its accidents.

The eleventh book concerns the principle of substance and of all existence and establishes its quiddity: it is that which knows itself by essence and is true by its essence. It considers the separate beings which come after it and explains how they order the existence of the beings that derive from them.

The twelfth book deals with the principles of the natural and mathematical things.

Here is the explanation of the aim of this work and its parts.

The science of metaphysics is, therefore, according to al-Fārābī, a universal science, first philosophy, ontology and theology. This position also emerges clearly in his *Enumeration of the Sciences*, where he affirms that the divine science, whose complete exposition is found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, is divided into three distinct parts. Al-Fārābī briefly characterizes the first two parts and concentrates on the third specifically theological part:

Divine science is divided into three parts, the first of which investigates beings and the things that happen to them *qua* beings.

The second investigates the principles of the demonstrations in the particular theoretical sciences, that is, those principles on account of which every science is identified by the fact that it investigates a particular being, such as logic, geometry, mathematics, and the other particular sciences which are similar to these sciences. It investigates in fact the principles of logic, the principles of the mathematical sciences, and the principles of physics, attempting to verify them and to teach their properties. It then corrects the erroneous opinions which the Ancients had regarding the principles of these sciences, such as the opinion of one who held that the point, unity, lines, and surfaces were substances and separate, and the opinions related to them regarding the principles of the other sciences, and it confutes them and demonstrates that they are untrue.

The third part investigates those beings that are not bodies and are not in bodies. It researches in the first place whether they exist or not; and it demonstrates that they exist. It examines whether they are many or not; and it demonstrates that they are many. It investigates whether they are finite in number or not; and it demonstrates that they are finite (in number). It researches whether their degrees with respect to perfection are a single degree or whether their degrees are different and it demonstrates that they are different with respect to perfection. Then it demonstrates that in their multiplicity they raise themselves from their imperfection towards a gradually more and more perfect degree until they terminate in that which is the final step, which is that perfection concerning which it is not possible for there to be anything which is more perfect and concerning which it is not possible for there to be anything similar to its degree of being, neither equal nor contrary to it. And (they raise themselves) to that First, of which it is not possible to find anything that is prior to it, and to that precedent which nothing can have preceded, and to that being which cannot acquire its existence from any other thing – this being is eternal, and the precedent absolutely one. It then clarifies that the other beings are posterior to it with respect to being; that it is the First One which confers unity to everything outside of itself; and that it is the First Truth for that which has truth; and, in

addition, it clarifies how this conferral takes place because there cannot be in it any multiplicity in any way, since it is that which is worthy above every other thing of the name and the meaning of one, true, and first. Then it explains that that which enjoys these attributes is he who we must believe to be God – may He have honour and potency and may His names be blessed. It then examines the other attributes with which the Creator is qualified – may God be blessed – until it has covered all of them. Then it teaches how beings originate from Him and how they acquire existence from Him. The third part studies the degrees of beings, how those degrees come about, and in what way each of them is worthy of the degree it occupies; it also explains what their reciprocal connection is, their organization, and with what means they are connected and ordered. Finally it insists on listing the rest of his acts – to Him be honour and power – which concern beings, investigating them all, and explaining that in none of them is there injustice or imperfection, discord, irregularity, or disorder: in fact, in them there is no defect, nor is there anything bad in any of them. Subsequently it sets about confuting the erroneous opinions that are thought regarding God – honour and power to Him – and His acts, which introduce doubt about Him, His acts, and the beings He has created, and this third part confutes them all with demonstrations that give that certain knowledge about which man does not nourish uncertainty, is not disturbed by any doubt, and from which it is absolutely impossible to recede.²⁰⁰

Metaphysics, thus, is divided into three distinct parts. The first investigates beings *qua* beings and their attributes; the second investigates the principles of demonstrations in the particular theoretical sciences, verifies and makes known the substances which they consider and their attributes, and lists and criticizes the corrupt opinions expressed about them by the Ancients. In this second part a particular theoretical science is defined with respect to the fact that it investigates a particular genus of being. Al-Fārābī considers three of these particular theoretical sciences: logic (implicitly, it is assumed that the intelligible which logic deals with are a particular genus of beings), mathematics and physics. Finally, the divine science has within it a third part, that which is properly speaking theological, whose task is first of all to demonstrate the existence of those beings that are not bodies or in bodies, to determine that they are many, but finite in number and that they are placed in a hierarchical order which culminates in perfection, that is, in the One. In the second place it has the role of clarifying that this One can only be the God of revelation. Lastly it considers listing, making known, and explaining the attributes of God, the generation of beings from Him or derived from Him, their ordering, and

²⁰⁰ Al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm*, 87.10–90 González Palencia.

the goodness of divine action, and with confuting the incorrect opinions that have been expressed about Him.

The editorial plan of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* follows the ordering of the metaphysical and divine science according to al-Fārābī. It consists in fact of three distinct parts which reflect al-Fārābī's tripartite division presented above:

- (i) in the first part (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 140v27–153v20; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 16.5–64.12), which includes the first four chapters, we find the study of beings and their accidents;
- (ii) the second part (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 153v20–166v16; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 64.12–109.22), which goes from chapter five to chapter twelve, deals with the principles of definition and demonstration;
- (iii) the third and last part (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 166v16–187r12; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 109.22–178.15), comprising chapters thirteen to twenty-four, is devoted to a description of the hierarchy of the immaterial and intelligible realities until it reaches the First Mover, the First Principle, the First Cause, the One, which is nothing but the one God of the Koran, provident Creator, in a synthesis of Aristotelian metaphysics, Neoplatonic metaphysics, and Islamic monotheism.

3.1. *Part One: the Study of Beings and their Accidents*

The first part of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* comprises four chapters, containing the paraphrase of books *Alpha Elatton* and *Alpha Meizon*, *Beta*, *Delta*, and *Gamma 1–4*. For this part it is possible to trace the coherence of the structure of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's treatise back to al-Fārābī's suggestions in his work *The Aims of the Metaphysics*, concerning the contents of each book of the *Metaphysics*.

The first chapter (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 140v27–141v28; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 16.5–21.8), as we have seen,²⁰¹ constitutes precisely that which al-Fārābī defined as "a sort of beginning and suggestion" which 'Abd al-Laṭīf entitles *On the preparation of the soul for the Grasping of Truth and on the Fact That it is Not Possible for There To Be Certain Knowledge of*

²⁰¹ Cf. above 222–226.

Anything if Not Through its Causes and That, Therefore, Knowledge of the Causes is Necessary. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf introduces the idea that knowledge of truth is nothing but the knowledge of the cause and, in particular, of the First Causes, because if the species of causes were infinite in number, nothing would be known scientifically. Moreover, due to his examination of the doxography presented in *Alpha Meizon*, he determines the four principles of beings, which are the subject of study of wisdom, understood as universal science: matter, efficient cause, form and end. The contents of this chapter, therefore, consider the object indicated by al-Fārābī for the first chapter of the *Metaphysics*, namely an explanation of all the species of cause. Al-Fārābī specified that the object of this first book is an explanation of all the species of causes, and, in particular, of the fact that they culminate in the First Cause. This same theme features in the second chapter of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*.

Here (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 141v 28–145r15; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 21.8–33.17) at the statement “the causes are finite and if they were not finite there would not be a science to deal with them”, which constitutes the title of the chapter itself, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf presents a brief digression on the impossibility of an actual infinite (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 141v28–142v8; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 21.8–23.24). He demonstrates that his own research stops at the first material cause, which is defined by the form; at the first formal cause, which is finite with respect to number and has a first term that nothing else precedes; at the first efficient cause, which is the principle from which movement begins; and at the first final cause, which is the end at which movement ceases, in such a way that the effects are limited by both extremes and they are finite. For each of these First Causes, corruption and change from one state to another are impossible, because in this case further principles would be necessary, and therefore these First Causes would no longer be principles. Since definition is made up of a genus and a specific difference or by matter and a form, if a first genus and a last species and, hence, a specific difference is not found, it follows that for every genus there is a genus above it, for every species a species below it, and for every difference a difference above it and below it. But if genus, species and difference do not have first terms and last terms, then they remain unknown to us. The same is true for demonstration: from unknown things it is impossible to obtain known things; if there is no definition, there is neither demonstration nor knowledge; but knowledge exists, therefore, the causes and effects are finite.

Aristotle said that knowledge is not possible without arriving at the things that do not admit any further division, namely the first things that are simple. Therefore the four causes and principles are finite without exception, and numbers and measures and every being in act. As for that which is infinite in potency and in coming-to-be, the demonstration is not based on it; knowledge of things takes place due to knowledge of their causes and their principles.

In the same chapter, following al-Fārābī's teaching – who specified as the object of the second chapter “the enumeration of the difficult questions in these contexts”, “the explanation of their genre of difficulty”, and “the construction of opposite arguments which refer to them” – 'Abd al-Laṭīf introduces his paraphrase of *Metaphysics Beta*.²⁰² It is entitled *On the Exposition of Aporiai, on the Reason of Their Obscurity and Ambiguity, and on the Methods for Their Solution* (*Fī dīkr masā'ila wa-ḡihati al-awāṣi fi-hā wa-l-taškiki wa-l-iṣārati ilā ṭarīqi ḥalli-hā*). Before entering the discussion he says:

If the object which is sought ends in a high-level place or in obscurity, we need to use every means to reach it, making every possible effort to investigate every aspect and clarifying the *aporia*. In this way the obstacles and that which makes us stumble will disappear.

The canon to follow which concerns knowledge of what is sought is in itself difficult: concerning it there are many discordant opinions. First we will order them (i), then we will list people's opinions about them (ii), next, we will carefully examine them (iii), investigating each one by considering how much in it is true and how much in it is false and we will declare false everything that is false and true everything that is correct (iv). Then we will return to our original search and we will clarify its essence on account of the definition (*ḥadd*) and the description (*rasm*), since it is what we desire (v). Then we will start to consider its attributes and we will explain according to a causal demonstration (*burhān li-ma*) – in the case in which the object looked for has a principle – or according to a *conditional/that the thing is* demonstration (*burhān 'in*) – in the case in which the object has no principle (vi), and remove any doubts, having already reached the object looked for as far as possible.

The causes of a number of doubts by which knowledge is affected and, above all, which generate confusion are homonymous names, and poorly constructed syllogisms or syllogisms grounded on false premises. We will investigate the *aporiai* one by one.²⁰³

²⁰² Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 142v8–145r15; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 23.24–33.

²⁰³ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 142v9–16; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 23.25–24.9.

There are four items which should be pointed out: the object of the *diaporēisai*, the process of the *diaporēisai*, the terminology, and, finally, the causes by which the *aporiai* come about.

As for the objects of the *diaporēisai*, they are reminiscent of *Metaphysics* B 1, 995 a 24–26: “With a view to the science which we are seeking, first recount the subjects that should be first discussed. These include both the other opinions that some have held on certain points, and any points beside these that happen to have been overlooked”.²⁰⁴ But whereas in Aristotle the two reasons for an *aporia* arising are simply listed, in ‘Abd al-Laṭīf he explains that it is due to the high ontological status of objects whose high rank in the hierarchy of being prevents people from approaching them.

The process of the *diaporēisai* is expanded at length in ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī: the dialectical discussion of the *aporiai*, which consists for him in listing and examining the different opinions (i–iii) and in recognizing the true and false in them (iv) is not sufficient. After the dialectical investigation, we have to go back to what we were looking for and define its essence (v), to specify demonstratively its attributes (vi), and to solve any doubts remaining and thus reach the object as far as possible. The terminology of this second part of the *diaporēisai* is that of Avicenna: ‘Abd al-Laṭīf speaks of metaphysical definition (*ḥadd*), description (*rasm*), causal demonstration (*burhān li-ma*) and the *conditional/that the thing is demonstration* (*burhān ‘in*).

Finally, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf lists three main logical reasons for the causes which result in the arising of the *aporiai*: homonymy, the failure to construct syllogisms accurately and false premises.

He then puts forward thirteen *masā’il*. In some of these *aporiai* he tries to be faithful to the method of the *diaporēisai* he prescribed, while in others he does not.

1. First *aporia* (*al-mas’ala al-ūlā*). Does the examination of every kind of cause belong to one science or to many (*Metaph.* B 2, 996a 18–b 26)?²⁰⁵
2. *Aporia* (*mas’ala*). Is the science of the principles of things and that of the principles of demonstrations one and the same or do they differ (*Metaph.* B 2, 996b 26–997a 15)?²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ English Translation in Barnes (1985²), II, 1572.

²⁰⁵ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 142v16–34; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 24.9–25.6.

²⁰⁶ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 142v34–143r12; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 25.7–24.

3. Aporia (*mas'ala*). Do the principles of demonstration come before those of substance, or is the contrary true? Does each of them possess its own principles? And does the science of one of them come before the science of the other (*Metaph.* B 2, 997a 11–15)?²⁰⁷
4. Aporia (*mas'ala*). Do the supra-sensible substances exist in addition to the sensible ones? If so, do they share the same genus with the sensible substances or not (*Metaph.* B 2, 997a 34–998a 19)?²⁰⁸
5. Aporia (*mas'ala*). Science suits its subject. If the subjects of science are the individuals which come to be and pass away, then science in so far as it is eternal does not correspond to its subjects. Knowledge itself is grounded in eternal forms, on which eternal knowledge is based, existing in themselves externally. If however the need for an eternal object to know, on which eternal science can base itself, seems well founded, the fact that it is fixed externally seems false. The intellect grasps from the individual realities that stable something which is universal – genus and species – on which knowledge is based. The form of the universal is in fact fixed, and it is not subject to corruption. If the universal is removed, the definitions would be removed too, and so likewise would be demonstrations, science and intellect; the differences and the similarities among things would also be eliminated, but all this is absurd. The universals are neither outside nor inside sensible things and they are not their elements, but their being and their foundation are in the intellect: accordingly if the intellect is eliminated, the universals disappear. Indeed, only the intellect can derive from individual realities, describe them in their essence, and apply them to the individual realities in order to know them in themselves.²⁰⁹
6. Aporia (*mas'ala*). Knowledge and the object known are one and the same thing both from the viewpoint of the object and of the definitions which make the things be known. Are the genera the real principles of things? Or, as some pretend, are the principles of things the One and being? In any case, the One and being are not genera (*Metaph.* B 3, 998b 5–999a 1).²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 143r12–30; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 25.24–26.24.

²⁰⁸ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 143r30–143v3; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 26.24–27.9.

²⁰⁹ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 143v3–19; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 27.9–28.5.

²¹⁰ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 143v19–144r2; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 28.5–29.5. We can see in this aporia an

7. Aporia (*mas'ala*). It be the case that universals do not exist, science and art likewise would not exist, nor definitions, demonstrations, predicates, objects, or qualities, because the individual realities are infinite and there is no science of the infinite. Consequently there must be an eternal universal on which the individual realities depend. (*Metaph.* B 3, 999a 24–b 24).²¹¹
8. Difficult aporia (*mas'ala 'awīṣa*). Are the principles of the incorruptible realities the same as the principles of the corruptible things? If the principles are corruptible, how can incorruptible things exist? If the principles are incorruptible, how can things be corruptible (*Metaph.* B 4, 1000a 5–1001a 3)?²¹²
9. The most difficult aporia (*mas'ala hiya a'waṣ al-masā'il*) is that which those who have devoted themselves to research need (to resolve) for the knowledge of the truth. Are being and the One the substances of beings? Are they connected to each other, or is the one only being, and the other only the One (*Metaph.* B 4, 1001a 4–b 25)?²¹³
10. Obscure aporia (*mas'ala jāmiḍa*) on which philosophers and theologians of the past and the present do not agree. Should we say that numbers, bodies, surfaces, lines, points and unities are substances (*Metaph.* B 5, 1001b 26–1002b 11)?²¹⁴

attempt to cast Aristotle's argument into Neoplatonic form: "There are those who say that the One and being are principles of things because they are the most universal and the most general, and they are omnicomprehensive since everything exists within them, and only their being is in the mind. The One and being are not a genus [...]. The One and being, on the other hand, are more suited to be principles because of their generality and not because of the fact that they are a genus, but because of the fact that they are subsistence in themselves and from this every being and identity of things with themselves derives. The True One is that in which it is in no way possible to imagine multiplicity: from any aspect in which you wish to consider it, it is One, and unity belongs to itself by itself [...]. This quality is the quality proper to the First Principle and only to it does truth belong and every other thing is described with respect to unity in reference to it. Thus from a certain point of view there is in it multiplicity. The way to knowledge of the True One only comes about due to the transition through the things that have unity [...]. and so it is said of an army, a city [...], that Zayd is one, [...] that the heavenly sphere is one and that the world is one [...]. Let us then proceed towards the souls, then towards the intellects, and then towards all the things that raise us up to lose multiplicity and gain unity until we reach the Absolute One which does not mix with multiplicity [...]."

²¹¹ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 144r2–12; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 29.5–19.

²¹² Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 144r12–21; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 29. 19–30.6.

²¹³ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 144r21–144v7; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 30.6–31.10.

²¹⁴ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 144v7–25; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 31.10–32.9.

11. Aporia (*mas'ala*): Are the elements in potentiality, in actuality, or both (*Metaph.* B 5, 1002b 32–1003a 5)?²¹⁵
12. Aporia (*mas'ala*). Are the principles universal or particular (*Metaph.* B 6, 1003a 5–17)?²¹⁶
13. Aporia (*mas'ala*): If the predicate is the subject and “man” is predicated of Zayd and ‘Amr, then Zayd is ‘Amr; and “animal” is predicated of man and horse, then man is horse. This problem is resolved if we consider that Zayd is ‘Amr by species, but different from him as an individual, and man is horse from the point of view of the genus, but is different from horse as a species and an individual. Therefore the individual realities are impressed in the imagination: if the soul examines them carefully it finds strange things – they change, are stable, and they are also essential. The soul, however denies that which is strange and accepts that which is essential and stable. It puts together a pure form which is ideal and in conformity with infinite individual realities, but is not multiple. And the visual faculty impresses in itself a form Zayd with a great number of attributes whose presence it demands. And if the form is in the imagination, it is impossible to do without its presence, but vice versa there is no need for the individualization of Zayd if the form is in the intellect, and it does not demand with it any attribute of matter, and hence becomes universal and it is opportune for it to be in conformity with infinite individual realities. Universals in themselves are not substances, but instead are only images and predicates, yet they are said to be substances in the sense that they know the substances.²¹⁷

The third chapter (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 145r15–152r3; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 33.17–58.4) of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* is entitled *On the Enumeration of the Meanings in Which the Names are Used Metaphorically in This Science Insofar As They Indicate the Objects of This Science (Fī iḥšā' al-ma'ānī allatī yuqālu 'alay-hā al-asmā' al-musta'arat fī hādā al-'ilm li-mā kānat al-asmā' al-dālla 'alā mawḍū'āt hādā al-'ilm)*. Following in the footsteps of book *Delta* of the *Metaphysics*, 'Abd al-Laṭīf presents a list of the

²¹⁵ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 144v25–33; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 32.9–21.

²¹⁶ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 144v33–145r8; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 32. 21–33.7.

²¹⁷ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 145r8–15; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 33.7–17.

meanings of the terms used in the metaphysical science. Once again, therefore, the structure of his treatise follows the indications provided by al-Fārābī, who specified that the contents of the third chapter of the *Metaphysics* should not be the contents of *Gamma*, but “an enumeration of the objects of this science, that is to say, the concepts that it studies, just as their proper accidents”.

‘Abd al-Laṭīf introduces the chapter by affirming that it is necessary to list the meanings of the terms used in metaphysical science in order to be able to distinguish between the various meanings of a single name, and to avoid confusion in cases of homonymy and ambiguity.

Thus he explains the terms of metaphysics in an order that he presents as going, according to him, from the more general to the more specific:

- Principle (*al-mabdaʿ*; *Metaph.* Δ 1, 1012b 34–1013a 24).²¹⁸
- Cause (*al-illa*; *Metaph.* Δ 2, 1013a 24–1014a 25).²¹⁹
- Element (*al-uṣṭuquṣṣ*; *Metaph.* Δ 3, 1014a 26–1014b 15).²²⁰
- Nature (*al-ṭabīʿa*; *Metaph.* Δ 4, 1014b 15–1015a 19).²²¹
- Necessary (*al-ḍarūrī*; *Metaph.* Δ 5, 1015a 20–1015b 15).²²²
- One (*al-wāḥid*; *Metaph.* Δ 6, 1015b 16–1017a 6 + Δ 7, 1017a 7–22).²²³
- Categories (*al-maḥlāt*; *Metaph.* Δ 7, 1017a 22–30).²²⁴
- Relation (*al-nisba*; *Metaph.* Δ 15, 1020b 26–1021b 11).²²⁵

²¹⁸ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 145r21–34; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 33.24–34.16.

²¹⁹ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 145r34–145v15; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 34.16–35.10.

²²⁰ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 145v15–18; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 35.10–15. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī lists these first three concepts underlying that the first, i.e. principle, is more general than the second and the second, i.e. cause, is more general than the third, i.e. element.

²²¹ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 145v19–26; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 35.15–24.

²²² Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 145v26–32; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 35. 24–36.8.

²²³ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 145v32–146v23; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 36.8–39.15. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī explains at the beginning that the One is in conformity with being and that both are said according to multiple meanings. Then he presents an analysis of the different meaning of one, from the one *per accidens* to the one *per se* following Aristotle’s text. Then he states that every kind of unity has some aspect of multiplicity in it except the unity of which is True and Pure One without any multiplicity *per se* or *per accidens*. This reading of *Metaph.* Δ 6, 1015b 16–1017a 6 + Δ 7, 1017a 7–22 is reminiscent of al-Kindī, *Fī l-falsafa al-ülā*, 155.12–162.16 Abū Rida (1950); Ivry (1974), 107–114.

²²⁴ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 146v23–148r3; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 39.15–43.25.

²²⁵ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 148r4–18; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 43.25–44.18.

- Similarity (*al-taṣābuh*).²²⁶
- Identity of self with self (*al-huwiyya*);.²²⁷
- Being (*al-mawǧūd*; *Metaph.* Δ 7, 1017a 7–1017b 9).²²⁸
- Essence (*al-dāt*; *Metaph.* Δ 8, 1017b 21–22).²²⁹
- Being (*al-mawǧūd*).²³⁰
- Identical (*al-huwa huwa*; *Metaph.* Δ 9, 1017b 26–1018a 11).²³¹
- Prior and Posterior (*qablu wa ba'du*; *Metaph.* Δ 11, 1018b 9–1019a 14).²³²
- Substance (*ǧawhar*; *Metaph.* Δ 8, 1017b 10–26).²³³
- Quality (*kayfa*; *Metaph.* Δ 14, 1020a 33–1020b 25).²³⁴
- Potency and act (*al-qūwwa wa-l-fi'l*; *Metaph.* Δ 12, 1019a 15–1020 a5).²³⁵
- Perfect and lacking (*al-tāmm wa-l-nāqis*; *Metaph.* Δ 16, 1021b 12–1022a 3).²³⁶
- Limit (*al-nihāya*; *Metaph.* Δ 17, 1022a 4–13).²³⁷
- Where (*al-ayna*).²³⁸
- When (*al-matā*).²³⁹
- Being-affected (*infi'āl*; *Metaph.* Δ 21, 1022b 15–22).²⁴⁰
- Privation (*al-'adam*; *Metaph.* Δ 22, 1022b 22–1023a 7).²⁴¹

²²⁶ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 148r18–23; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 44.18–25.

²²⁷ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 148r24–148v10; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 45.1–46.2.

²²⁸ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 148v10–149r21; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 46.2–48.11.

²²⁹ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 149r21–149v28; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 48.11–50.15.

²³⁰ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 149v28–150r2; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 50.15–25.

²³¹ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 150r2–7; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 50.25–51.6.

²³² Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 150r7–13; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 51.6–14.

²³³ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 150r13–150v4; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 51.14–52.22.

²³⁴ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 150v4–12; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 52.22–536.

²³⁵ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 150v12–24; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 53.6–22.

²³⁶ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 150v24–29; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 53.22–54.3.

²³⁷ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 150v29–151r6; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 54.3–55.6.

²³⁸ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 151r7–19; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 55.6–9.

²³⁹ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 151r19–23; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 55.9–15.

²⁴⁰ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 151r23–27; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, p. 55.15–20.

²⁴¹ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 151r28–33; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 55. 20–56.2.

- Having in itself by itself (*al-dū la-hu min aġli-hi*; *Metaph.* Δ 23, 1023a 8–25).²⁴²
- Having something from something else, that is, to derive (*al-dū min al-šay'*; *Metaph.* Δ 24, 1023a 26–1023b 11).²⁴³
- That for which (*min aġli*; *Metaph.* Δ 18, 1022a 14–22).²⁴⁴
- The whole, the part, the universal, and the particular (*al-kull, al-ġuz', al-kullī, al-ġuz'ī*; *Metaph.* Δ 25–26, 1023b 12–1024a 10)²⁴⁵

Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī purposely puts this list of terms used in metaphysical science before the fourth chapter (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 152r3–153v20; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 58.4–64.12), entitled *On the Enumeration of the Subjects of This Science (Fī iḥšā' mawḏū'āt hādā al-'ilm)*, in which he examines the subjects of metaphysical science by trying to use an appropriate and exact language. This fourth chapter concludes the first part of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* devoted to the study of beings and their accidents.

'Abd al-Laṭīf opens the chapter by stating that according to Themistius being as such, that is to say, the absolute being and the notions related to it, like existence and unity, being multiple, common, different and the principles, form the subject of metaphysical science. Even if 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī clarifies that the science of metaphysics, as a universal science, deals with being *qua* being, he seems to identify it with none other than the One, first and true principle. He observes that we use the term being (*al-mawġūd*) for the different realities only in relation to their proximity to or distance from the First Principle which is the true being. This science also deals with the attributes of being, its properties, and its principles. In this sense it is distinguished from the particular theoretical sciences. But since the science of contraries is one, it is the task of this same science to study non-being and multiplicity and hence the notions of multiple, common and different. Then, following *Metaph.* Γ 2, 1004b 17–26, 'Abd al-Laṭīf compares philosophy with dialectic and sophistry, which deal with the

²⁴² Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 151r33–36; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 56.2–5.

²⁴³ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 151r36–151v7; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 56.5–16.

²⁴⁴ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fol. 151v7–10; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, p. 56.16–20.

²⁴⁵ Ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 151v10–152r3; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 56. 20–58.4.

objects proper to philosophy, but differ as to their aims and means: only philosophy seeks perfect knowledge of beings due to knowledge of their principles. Paraphrasing *Gamma* 3, he stresses the fact that the philosopher does not only investigate the principles of substance, but also those of demonstration.

In this case there is no direct analogy of the contents of this chapter with those – they, too, are less than clear – indicated by al-Fārābī for the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*, namely the classification of “all that which is indicated in every expression referring to the objects of metaphysical science, the species of its objects, and their consequent properties, which is either by synonymy or by amphibology or by true equivocity”. If anything, this part of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* is linked to al-Fārābī’s description of metaphysical science understood as universal science and divine science, which introduces his *The Aims of the Metaphysics*.

3.2. Part Two: the Principles of Definition and Demonstration

The second part of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* includes chapters five to twelve. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf summarizes the central books of the *Metaphysics*.²⁴⁶ Here too it is possible to detect the traces of the various themes announced by al-Fārābī, in the same order. However, the structure within which they are set out is notably enlarged with respect to that of al-Fārābī.²⁴⁷ In the list below I will limit myself to presenting here a brief survey of the structure of this part of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s treatise:²⁴⁸

Chapter V (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 153v20–155r17; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 64.12–69.21).

Title: *On the Divisions of True Being and Not by Accident and on the Setting Out of the Rules in Definitions and For the First and the Second Being (Fī aqsām al-mawġūd al-ḥaqīqī lā alladī bi-l-araḍ wa-l-išāra ilā qawānīn al-ḥudūd wa li-l-mawġūd kamā li-an awwal wa t̄ānī).*

²⁴⁶ Neuwirth (1976), 263.

²⁴⁷ Cf. above 273.

²⁴⁸ This survey is limited to setting forth a broad framework. For this reason I have chosen to give a short list of the main topics. I hope to provide the analysis of all these chapters in the running commentary that will be attached to my edition of these parts of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*.

The main topics are the following:

- The distinction between natural being and another more perfect being.
- The inquiry into the latter from three different points of view: as Being, in the intellect and in relation to the theoretical sciences devoted to it.
- The four meanings of substance, namely substance understood as the truth and essence of a thing, as when we say what the substance of heat is; substance understood as a species, as when we ask what the substance of Zayd is and we reply 'man'; substance understood as genus, as when we ask what the substance of 'man' is and we reply 'animal'; and substance understood as individual, Zayd o 'Amr. This last case is the first and truest meaning of substance: a sensible substance composed of matter and form.
- The discussion of substance understood as matter, substance understood as form and substance understood as a compound of matter and form.

Cf. Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z 3; al-Fārābī's *The Aims of the Metaphysics*: Book five (the explanation of the essential divisions which separate the three theoretical sciences, namely the natural and mathematical sciences and the divine science; the study of the quiddity that is said to be such by essence and not by accident); Book six (the determination of quiddity which is said by essence and in particular of substantiality; the classification of the kinds of substance i.e.: matter, form and the compound).

Chapter VI (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 155r17–156r33; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 69.21–74.13).

Title: *On Definitions and Their Principles (Fī l-ḥudūd wa mabādī'i-hā)*.

The main topics are the following:

- We have a science of something when we have knowledge of its principles. In fact, every being, in so far as it is an effect, is the product of a series that begins from a First Principle, which is only cause, which has intermediate degrees which are both causes and caused, and which terminates in something that is only an effect. The cause gives being to the effects in so far as it is that which is and that which is most worthy of being.
- Every science has principles which are clarified by means of demonstration or in some other way. Most of that which concerns the science under investigation is clarified thanks to an *a posteriori* demonstration.

Demonstration must be distinguished from definition. Demonstration has definitions in it, and uses a middle term that corresponds to a single element of the definition.

- Plato accepts definitions only for that which results from a complete process of analysis and decomposition, hence for elements; but Aristotle conceives of definition as something which is composed of genus and difference or differences.²⁴⁹
- It is necessary to look for the definitions of all that we can, or better, of all that it is possible to define, otherwise we will have no knowledge at all and we will never reach the truth. In order to know all the realities that are studied by physics, we must first of all investigate what matter is and what form is, since it is not possible to define any of the natural realities without first having defined matter and form. Only in this way is it possible to reach from the natural realities the realities separate from matter, and then to reach that reality which moves without itself moving, the First Mover, simple, pure, and absolute, free from any form of mixing, the First Principle and Pure Good: the Pure Good in fact constitutes the perfection of the being which exists because of the Pure Good itself and which derives from it an individualized good, namely its own form. The form on its own, however, is not enough to explain the natural substances, which necessitate an agent principle, a matter and an end.

Cf. Aristotle, *Metaph. Z*; al-Fārābī's *The Aims of the Metaphysics*: Book six (the definition for all being and for all substance, the explanation of how a composite is defined, and what the parts of its definition are, and which are separate forms and which are not separate, and which genus of existences belongs to the one and which to the other).

Chapter VII (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 156r34–157v32; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 74.13–79.19).

Title: *On the Four Causes and on the Refutation of Models (Fī l-asbāb al-arba'a wa fī ibtāl al-muṭul)*.

The main topics are the following:

- The doctrine of the causes. That from which things are generated is a potency called matter, both in the generation of natural things, like

²⁴⁹ This seems to be a reference to al-Fārābī's *Harmony between Plato and Aristotle*: cf. Martini Bonadeo (2008), 46.5–47.16, 124–126.

sperm, for example, and in the generation of artificial things, such as a bed from wood. Original matter is studied with respect to the fact that it receives a particular form, Zayd, for example, or this bed, and this is called the formal cause. Then there is he who gives the form as in the case of the parent with a child or the craftsman with his work, and this is the efficient cause. This is the process both of generation and production; we have this latter, however, when the form pre-exists in the soul of the craftsman. The processes of generation and production imply two steps, thought and action: the physician has in his soul the form of the illness, that is, the proper form of that which is present in the sick person, and the opposite form, namely the absence of illness, with respect to which he can restore health in the sick person; hence he acts (there is a digression here on the first agent).

- In every process of generation and production it is necessary, therefore, for there to be a pre-existent matter, the condition of becoming which itself undergoes becoming.
- The concept of privation.
- There must be an agent and a form or instead the thing towards which the agent and matter move, which is none other than the end.
- The ingenerability of form
- The confutation of Plato's incorrect opinion regarding the existence of forms separate from matter, placed as paradigms of the natural realities.
- On the role of form in all the processes of generation and production.
- On the difference between Aristotle and Plato regarding the doctrine of forms.²⁵⁰ Plato is convinced that the forms exist outside the intellect; Aristotle on the other hand holds that they exist in the essence of the First Principle since it involves all things and from it is the being of all things.²⁵¹

Cf. Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z 7–9.

Chapter VIII (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 157v32–159r3; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 79.19–83.8).

Title: *On the Definitions of the Forms and on the Essences of the Matters* (*Fī ḥudūd al-ṣuwar wa dawāt al-mādda*).

²⁵⁰ Cf. above 249.

²⁵¹ For the same reference to al-Fārābī's *Harmony between Plato and Aristotle* cf. above note 110; Martini Bonadeo (2008), 68. 14–70.7, 211–219.

The main topics are the following:

- The question of whether the definition of the whole includes the definitions of its parts. “Part” is not to be understood as quantity or according to the other categories, but only in relation to substance (form, matter, or the compound of form and matter). When by “whole” we understand a composite of form and matter, the notion of the whole includes the material part, but if by “whole” we understand the form then there comes into the definition of the whole only the form and we have a definition in the true sense of form.
- The relationship of priority and posteriority between the whole and the parts. If by “parts” we mean the form, then these are prior to the whole; if we mean the material parts, these are that which the compound is divided into and hence subsequent to the whole; if, finally, we mean the compound of matter and form as such, the parts of the compound are on one hand prior, that is, as they are the elements from which the compound was formed, and on the other not, since they do not exist separately from the compound.

Cf. Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z 10–11.

Chapter IX (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 159r4–160v32; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 83.8–90.1).

Title: *On the Fact That the Definitions for Universals and Not for Individual Realities are Cancelled and on the Forms* (*Fī anna l-ḥudūd li-l-kullīyyāt lā bi-l-aṣḥāṣ al-dāṭira wa fī l-muṭul*).

The main topics are the following:

- How is it possible for unity to be produced in that which is contained in the definition, namely between proximate genus and differences, which by further division reach the specific difference which is then the essence of the thing defined?
- Why what is universal cannot be substance and, hence, no definition of it is given. The universal lacks what is distinctive for the substance: it is common, it is predicated of something else, it is not something determined, and it does not exist separately.

Cf. Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z 12–17.

Chapter X (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 160v32–163r12; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma* 117, pp. 90.1–97.9).

Title: *On the Whole of What Has Been Said on Definitions, on Matter and on Forms and, Moreover, on Potency and on Act* (*Fī ḡumal mā sabaqa fī l-ḥudūd wa-l-mawādd wa-l-ṣuwar wa-fī l-quwwa wa-l-fī'l*).

The main topics are the following:

- On a recapitulation of the arguments presented in the previous chapters and on matter again.
- On Aristotle's doctrine of potency and act.
- Being, understood in the sense of the first, perfect, pure substance always in act, and being in the second sense, namely in potency, ordered to a certain degree with respect to that which is perfect in the greatest degree. On the basis of this initial distinction and the doctrine of the priority of act over potency according to definition, time, and substance, he describes the entire hierarchy of beings again.

Cf. Aristotle, *Metaph.* H, Θ; al-Fārābī's *The Aims of the Metaphysics*: Book seven (summary of the previous books); book eight (treatment of potency and act and their relationship of priority and posteriority).

Chapter XI (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 163r12–165r5; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 97.9–104.2).

Title: *On the One, on the Multiple, on the Different, on the Contradictory, on the Contrary, and on the Opposite* (*Fī l-waḥīd wa-l-kaṭīr wa-l-ḡayr wa-l-ḥilāf wa-l-ḍidd wa-l-muqābil*).

The main topics are the following:

- On the multiplicity of movement according to speed and deceleration, time, place, movers, and species, versus the unicity of the mover of the sky according to matter, time, place, end, principle and form, and quality.
- On the one according to number and to the measure of quantity.
- Multivocity of the one.
- On the one according to nature.
- On the perfect.
- On the contradictory, on the contrary and on the opposite.
- On the middle terms.

Cf. Aristotle, *Metaph.* I; al-Fārābī's *The Aims of the Metaphysics*: Book nine (the one, the multiple, the other, the different, and the contrary).

Chapter XII (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, fols 165r5–166v16; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, *Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma* 117, pp. 104.2–109.22).

Title: *On the Parts That Are Not Divisible and on the Examination of Arguments Concerning Them* (Fī l-ağzā' allatī lā tatağazza' wa-stiqsā' al-kalām fī-hā).

The main topics are the following:

- Democritus' doctrine of atoms as indivisible parts whose 'extension' is not grasped by sense-perception, but by intellect. These parts have geometrical forms, and that they are different in size. If they join together they form a body, but they are indivisible in themselves, in their nature and substance.
- The Platonists, who state that the primary principles are surfaces and lines, and these geometrical figures depend on small parts, the points, which are indivisible in their substance, but whose 'extension' is conceivable to the intellect like the pieces of a stone are perceptible to the senses.
- The surfaces and the lines and the points used by those who study geometry: they are accidents and not substances. They are finite and division does not occur in what is finite. Moreover, geometry considers abstract shapes separate from matter, without the qualities and the accidents related to the matter of a natural body. It includes also abstractive knowledge from natural body to surface, from surface to line, and from line to point.
- Aristotle's opinion on the indivisible in the *De Generatione et Corruptione* against those (sc. the Pluralists) who identify coming-to-be with aggregation, and corruption with disgregation. The size or magnitude in the things that come to be and pass away is an accident such as hot and cold, white and black. The exposition of the problems that arise if we assume the infinite divisibility of a magnitude and the problems that arise if we assume the hypothesis of indivisible magnitudes or bodies with a reference to book three of *De Caelo*.

Cf. Aristotle, *De Generatione et Corruptione* A; Aristotle, *De Caelo* Γ.

From these short lists of the main topics of chapters V–XII, where 'Abd al-Laṭīf summarizes the central books of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, it is possible to recognize various themes announced in books V–IX of al-Fārābī's *The Aims of the Metaphysics*, even if the structure within which they are set out is notably enlarged by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī.

Furthermore, if, on the one hand, 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, according to al-Fārābī's teaching, endeavours to consider the properly ontological doctrines of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, on the other end, he suggests the difference between natural being and another more perfect Being, which gives

being to the effects in so far as it is that which is and that which is most worthy of being.

For ‘Abd al-Laṭīf the study of natural being, which starts from the inquiry into what matter is and what form is, aims to reach the realities separate from matter, and that reality which moves without moving, the First Mover, simple, pure, and absolute, free from any form of admixture, the First Principle and Pure Good: the Pure Good in fact constitutes the perfection of the beings which exist on account of the Pure Good itself and which derive from it an individualized good, namely their own form. According to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s Aristotle, in fact, all the forms exist in the essence of the First Principle because it involves all things and from it is the being of all things.

In this way the chapters of the second part of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* introduce well yet without a solution of continuity the long discussion that follows in the third part of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s treatise, devoted to a philosophical theology.

3.3. *Part Three: the Hierarchy of the Immaterial and Intelligible Realities*

The third and last part, which includes chapters thirteen to twenty-four, is devoted to a description of the hierarchy of the immaterial and intelligible realities, in a particularly interesting synthesis of Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism.

As we have seen before,²⁵² in the thirteenth chapter of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* we find a paraphrase of book *Lambda* of the *Metaphysics*, strongly influenced by Themistius. In the eleventh chapter of *The Aims of the Metaphysics*, al-Fārābī did the same. He discussed the principle of substance and of all that which is, established the quiddity of this principle – which knows by essence and is true by essence – and considered the separate beings which come after it. He finally explained how the existence of the beings which derive from this First Principle is ordered. The fourteenth chapter of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* consists of an account of the Ptolemaic system. Chapter fifteen summarizes and discusses the points raised in the previous two chapters. Finally, the sixteenth chapter contains a compendium of the *Principles of the Universe* (*Fī mabādi’ al-kull*) by Alexander of Aphrodisias. In the chapters which follow there are summaries, as we have already seen, of the *De Providentia* of Alexander of Aphrodisias, the *Liber de causis*, several sections of Proclus’

²⁵² Cf. above 230–235.

Elements of Theology and the last three of Plotinus' *Enneads*, the *Pseudo-Theology of Aristotle*.

The picture outlined in this part of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* is perfectly coherent with what al-Fārābī deals with in the third part of divine science in the *Enumeration of the Sciences*:

- (i) the study of the separate substances which are not bodies and are not in bodies: these substances are many, finite in number, ordered according to their degree of perfection up until that perfection of which it is not possible for there to be anything more perfect, the first and True One, the first Being which confers unity, being, and truth to everything;
- (ii) the study of this First Principle, free from any form of multiplicity, which above every thing is worthy of the name and the meaning of one, being, true, and first, and which we must believe is God;
- (iii) the study of the Creator, his attributes, the way he gives existence to beings, the degrees of beings and the modality in which their degrees result and by which each one of them is worthy of the degree it occupies, their reciprocal link, and their organization;
- (iv) the study of the Creator's way of acting in relation to beings, which does not include injustice, imperfection, disharmony, or disorder, and the confutation of the false opinions about God and his acts.

In the table below there is a synthesis of the sources and the structure of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*.

<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
Ch. I <i>On the Preparation of the Soul For the Grasping of Truth and on the Fact That it is Not Possible for There to be Certain Knowledge of Anything if Not</i>	Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> α 1–3, 993a30–995a4 Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> A 980a21–990b1 Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> α 3, 993b11–995a10	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . I Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Study of Beings and their Accidents al-Fārābī, <i>The Aims of the Metaphysics</i> . Book Ist

(Continued)

<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
<p><i>Through its Causes and That Therefore Knowledge of the Causes is Necessary (Fī tamhīd al-nafs li-iṣāba al-ḥaqq wa anna l-ṣay' lā yumkinu an yu'lama al-'ilm al-yaqīn 'illā min ḡihati al-asbāb wa-li-dālika kāna 'ilm al-asbāb wāḡiban)</i></p>		
<p>Edition: Neuwirth (1977–78), 84–100</p>		
<p>Ch. II <i>On the Fact That the Causes are Finite. If They Were Not Finite, the Science Which Aims at Knowing Them Would Be Impossible (Fī anna l-'ilal mutanāhiya wa law lam takun mutanāhiya lam yata'alaq bi-hā 'ilm)</i> <i>On the Exposition of Aporiai, on the Reason for Their Obscurity and Ambiguity, and on the Methods for Their Solution (Fī dīkr masā'ila wa-ḡihati al-'awṣi fī-hā wa-l-taškiki wa-l-iṣārati ilā ṭarīqi ḥalli-hā).</i></p>	<p>Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> B</p>	<p>al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i>. I Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Study of Beings and their Accidents al-Fārābī, <i>The Aims of the Metaphysics</i>. Book IInd</p>
<p>(ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye</p>		

<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
<p>Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 141v 28–145r15; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad</i> <i>Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma</i> 117, pp. 21.8–33.17)</p>		
<p>Ch. III <i>On the Enumeration of the Meanings in Which the Names are Used Metaphorically in This Science Insofar As They Indicate the Objects of This Science</i> (<i>Fī ihṣāʾ al-maʿānī allatī yuqālu ʿalay-ha al-asmāʾ al-mustaʿarat fī hādā al-ʿilm li-mā kānat al-asmāʾ al-dālla ʿalā mawḍūʿāt hādā al-ʿilm</i>) (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 145r15–152r3; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad</i> <i>Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma</i> 117, pp. 33.17–58.4)</p>	<p>Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> Δ Γ 1–4</p>	<p>al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i>. I Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Study of Beings and their Accidents</p>
<p>Ch. IV <i>On the Enumeration of the Subjects of This Science</i> (<i>Fī ihṣāʾ mawḍūʿāt hādā al-ʿilm</i>)</p>	<p>Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> Γ 1–4</p>	<p>al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i>. I Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Study of Beings and their Accidents</p>

(Continued)

<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
(ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 152r3–153v20; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma</i> 117, pp. 58.4–64.12)		al-Fārābī, <i>The Aims of the Metaphysics</i> . Books IIIrd, IVth
Ch. V <i>On the Divisions of True Being Which is Not By Accident and on the Setting Out of the Rules in Definitions and For the First and the Second Being</i> (<i>Fī aqsām al-mawḡūd al-ḥaqīqī lā alladī bi-l-‘araḍ wa-l-išāra ilā qawānīn al-ḥudūd wa li-l-mawḡūd kamā li-an awwal wa tānī</i>).	Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> Z 3	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . II Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Principles of Definition and Demonstration
(ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 153v20–155r17; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-Miṣriyya, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma</i> 117, pp. 64.12–69.21).		al-Fārābī, <i>The Aims of the Metaphysics</i> . Books Vth, VIth
Ch. VI <i>On Definitions and Their Principles</i> (<i>Fī l-ḥudūd wa</i>	Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> Z (in its general contents)	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . II Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Principles of

<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
<p><i>mabādī'i-hā</i>) (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 155r17–156r33; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma</i> 117, pp. 69.21–74.13).</p>		<p>Definition and Demonstration al-Fārābī, <i>The Aims of the Metaphysics</i>. Book VIth</p>
<p>Ch. VII <i>On the Four Causes and on the Refutation of Models</i> (<i>Fī l-asbāb al-arba'a wa fī ibtāl al-mutul</i>) (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 156r34–157v32; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma</i> 117, pp. 74.13–79.19)</p>	<p>Aristotle, <i>Metaph. Z</i> 7–9.</p>	<p>al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i>. II Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Principles of Definition and Demonstration</p>
<p>Ch. VIII <i>On the Definitions of the Forms and on the Essences of the Matters</i> (<i>Fī ḥudūd al-ṣuwar wa dawāt al-mādḍa</i>) (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 157v32–159r3; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma</i> 117, pp. 79.19–83.8).</p>	<p>Aristotle, <i>Metaph. Z</i> 10–11</p>	<p>al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i>. II Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Principles of Definition and Demonstration</p>

(Continued)

<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
<p>Ch. IX <i>On the Fact That the Definitions for Universals and Not for Individual Realities are Cancelled and on the Forms</i> <i>(Fī anna al-ḥudūd li-l-kullīyyāt lā bi-l-ašḥāṣ al-dāṭira wa fī l-muṭul)</i> (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 159r4–160v32; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma</i> 117, pp. 83.8–90.1)</p>	<p>Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> Z 12–17</p>	<p>al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i>. II Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Principles of Definition and Demonstration</p>
<p>Ch. X <i>On the Whole of What Has Been Said on Definitions, on Matters and on Forms and, Moreover, on Potency and on Act</i> <i>(Fī ḡumal mā sabaqa fī l-ḥudūd wa-l-mawādd wa-l-ṣuwar wa fī l-quwwa wa-l-fi‘l)</i> (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 160v32–163r12; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma</i> 117, pp. 90.1–97.9)</p>	<p>Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> H, Θ</p>	<p>al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i>. II Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Principles of Definition and Demonstration al-Fārābī, <i>The Aims of the Metaphysics</i>. Books VIIth, VIIIth</p>

<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
<p>Ch. XI <i>On the One, on the Multiple, on the Different, on the Contradictory, on the Contrary, and on the Opposite</i> <i>(Fī l-waḥīd wa-l-kaṭīr wa-l-ġayr wa-l-ḥilāf wa-l-ḍidd wa-l-muqābil)</i> (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 163r12–165r5; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma</i> 117, pp. 97.9–104.2)</p>	Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> I	<p>al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i>. II Part of the Science of Metaphysics: the Principles of Definition and Demonstration</p> <p>al-Fārābī, <i>The Aims of the Metaphysics</i>. Book IXth</p>
<p>Ch. XII <i>On the Parts That Are Not Divisible and on the Examination of Arguments Concerning Them</i> <i>(Fī aġzā' allatī lā tataġazza'u wa-stiqṣā' al-kalām fī-hā)</i> (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 165r5–166v16; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma</i> 117, pp. 104.2–109.22)</p>	<p>Aristotle, <i>De Generatione et Corruptione</i> A Aristotle, <i>De Caelo</i> Γ</p>	<p>al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the sciences</i>. II Part of the science of Metaphysics: the principles of definition and demonstration</p>

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<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
Ch. XIII <i>On the Contents of Book Lām</i> (<i>Fī mā tataḍammanuhu Maqālat al-Lām</i>) Edition: Neuwirth (1976), 3–63	Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> Λ 1–6 (without 5) Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on <i>Metaph.</i> Λ (Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus?) Aristotle, <i>Metaph.</i> Λ 6–10 without 8 1073b17–1074a31 Themistius' paraphrase on <i>Metaph.</i> Λ 7 and <i>Metaph.</i> Λ 9 (Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn?) Plato, <i>Timaeus</i> (Ibn al-Biṭrīq?)	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science al-Fārābī, <i>The Aims of the Metaphysics</i> . Book XIth
Ch. XIV <i>On the Astronomical Science of Lām</i> (<i>Fī 'ilm al-hay'a al-muttaṣil bi-Maqālat al-Lām</i>) Edition: Neuwirth (1976), 65–73	Exposition of Ptolemaic system rather than of <i>Metaph.</i> Λ 8, 1073b17–1074a31	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science
Ch. XV <i>On Movement, Contrary, Scope and the Other Causes</i> (<i>Fī l-ḥaraka wa-l-ḍidd wa-l-ġāya wa-sā'ir al-asbāb</i>) Edition: Neuwirth (1976), 75–89	<i>Metaph.</i> Λ (appendix on the concepts of movement, time, the contraries, final cause and the other causes)	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science

<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
Ch. XVI <i>On the Emanation of Potentiality and on the Order of the Derivation From the First Principle (Fī sarayān al-qūwwa wa-l-nizām min al-mabda' al-awwal)</i> Edition: Neuwirth (1976), 91–122	Alexander of Aphrodisias on <i>Metaph.</i> Λ (Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus) Alexander of Aphrodisias <i>Fī mabādi' al-kull</i> (by Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd Allāh)	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the sciences</i> . III Part of the science of Metaphysics: Divine science
Ch. XVII <i>How Providence Penetrates From the Superior to the Inferior World (Fī kayfiyyat nufūd al-tadbīr min al-'ālam al-a'lā ilā l-'ālam al-adnā)</i> (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 172v15–173v24; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Hikma</i> 117, pp. 130.10–134.1)	Alexander of Aphrodisias' <i>De Providentia</i> (al-Kindī's circle)	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science
Ch. XVIII <i>On Eternal Providence (Fī l-ināya al-azaliyya)</i> (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, <i>Carullah</i> 1279, fols 173v24–175r6; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, <i>Aḥmad</i>	Alexander of Aphrodisias' <i>De Providentia</i> (Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus)	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science

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<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
<i>Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma</i> 117, pp. 134.1–138.7)		
Ch. XIX <i>On Ability</i> (<i>Fī l-istiṭā'a</i>) (ms. İstanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah 1279, fols 175r6–175v16; ms. Cairo, Dār al-kutub, Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā, Ḥikma 117, pp. 138.7–140.11)	Alexander of Aphrodisias' <i>De Providentia</i>	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science
Ch. XX <i>On What the Wise Man Said in the Book of the Exposition of the Good</i> (<i>Fī mā qāla l-Ḥakīm fī kitāb idāḥ al-ḥayr</i>) Edition: Badawī (1955a), 248–256	<i>Liber de causis</i> (except prop. 4, 10, 18, and 20) Proclus, <i>Elements of Theology</i> . Prop. 54 <i>pseudo-Theology of Aristotle I</i>	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science
Ch. XXI <i>On Theology Which Is the Science of Divine Sovereignty</i> (<i>Fī Utūlūḡiyā wa-huwa 'ilm al-rubūbiyya</i>) Edition: Badawī (1955), 199–208	Proclus Arabus: Proclus' <i>Elements of Theology</i> . Prop. 1–3, 5, 62, 86, 78, 91, 76, 72–74, 167, 167a, 21, 16, 17, 15, 80, 79 (al-Kindī's circle) Alexander of Aphrodisias' <i>Quaestiones On the Fact That Form is Not In Matter As a Substrate</i> (<i>Fī anna l-ṣūra laysat fī l-hayūlā maḥmūla</i> ; quaest. I.8 = vE 32);	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science

*Book on the Science of
Metaphysics*

Sources

Structure

*On the Fact That What
is Generated, When It
Changes <Beginning
With Its Privation>, It
Changes At the same
time beginning with its
contrary, according to
Opinion of Aristotle
(Fī anna l-mukawwana
idā staḥāla stiḥāla min
ḍiddi-hi aīdan ma'an
'alā ra'y Aristūṭālīs;
quaest. II.11 = D 7);*

*On the World and
Which of Its Parts Have
Need in Their Endu-
rance and in Their
Perpetuation of the
Direction of the Other
Parts*

*(Fī l-'ālam wa-aiyu
aḡzā'i-hi yaḥtāḡu fī
ṭabāti-hi wa-dawāmi-hi
ilā tadbīr aḡzā' uḥrā;
quaest. II.19 = vE 33);*

*On the Power Coming
From the Movement of
the Sublime Body to the
Bodies Under*

*Generation and
Corruption (Fī l-qūwwa
al-ātiya min ḥarakat
al-ḡirm al-šarīf ilā
l-aḡrām al-wāqī'a taḥta
l-kawn wa-l-fasād;
quaest. II.3 = vE 34);*

*John Philoponus' De
aeternitate mundi
contra Proclum IX, 8,
338.21–25; 339.2–24*

(Continued)

<i>Book on the Science of Metaphysics</i>	Sources	Structure
	Rabe; IX,11, 345.4–335.26 Rabe, ascribed to the Arabic Alexander entitled <i>On the Refutation of Those Who Do Not Accept That a Thing is a Cause of Another</i> (<i>Fī ibṭāl qawl man qāla inna-hu lā yakūnu šay' 'illā min šay'</i> = D16).	
Ch. XXII <i>More on Theology</i> (<i>Fī Utūlūğiyā aydan</i>) Edition: Badawī (1955), 209–220	pseudo- <i>Theology of Aristotle</i> II–VIII (Long Version)	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science
Ch. XXIII <i>On Theology</i> (<i>Fī Utūlūğiyā</i>) Edition: Badawī (1955), 220–229	Plato, <i>Timaeus</i> (Ibn al-Biṭrīq?)	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science pseudo- <i>Theology of Aristotle</i> IX–X (Long Version)
Chap. XXIV <i>On What Remains of the Discourse on Theology</i> (<i>Fī baqāyat al-kalām fī Utūlūğiyā</i>) Edition: Badawī (1955), 230–240	Plato, <i>Timaeus</i> al-Fārābī, <i>Mabādī' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila</i>	al-Fārābī, <i>Enumeration of the Sciences</i> . III Part of the Science of Metaphysics: Divine Science

After this overview of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's reception and use of the Greek and Arabic sources, and the structure of the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*, we are in position to address the questions raised at the end of the first chapter. What was the history of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the *falsafa* after Avicenna? Which reading of this treatise did prevail, the "theologizing" or the "ontologizing" one? Which model of metaphysics survived the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, the Kindian or the Farabian one?

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's work on metaphysics is a good vantage point from which to evaluate the notion of metaphysical science which was elaborated in the Muslim East after Avicenna. This intellectual, so representative of his age, its system of the transmission of knowledge, and its culture, promoted a return to the Neoplatonized Aristotle which began in the origins of the *falsafa*. As for the metaphysical science, his *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* selects, gathers together, and preserves the tradition prior to him and conserved in the environment of the schools: the "theologizing" reading of the Greek metaphysics promoted by al-Kindī, the "philosopher of the Arabs", and awareness that metaphysics means ontology no less than theology, which characterizes the metaphysical thought of al-Fārābī, the "second master".

On the one hand, 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's treatise on metaphysics is deeply rooted in the set of philosophical works produced under direction of al-Kindī. The metaphysical doctrine presented by 'Abd al-Laṭīf is coherent with the original plan set forth at the beginning of the *falsafa*, by al-Kindī himself, for whom knowledge of causes coincided with natural theology and the latter had at its aim the knowledge of the First Principle, understood as the True One.

On the other hand, we have just seen that the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* reflects the systematization of the metaphysical science and al-Fārābī's awareness of the manifold nature of metaphysics: ontology, knowledge of causes, universal science, and divine science or theology.

'Abd al-Laṭīf finds both in al-Kindī as in al-Fārābī the most typical trait of metaphysics in the perspective of the *falsafa*, namely the compossibility of the Aristotelian and the Neoplatonic doctrine of the First Principle, which translates into a philosophy of reconciliation between faith in the God of the Koran and knowledge understood in an Aristotelian fashion as a search for the cause.

4. *From the Aristotelian Text of the Metaphysics to Metaphysics as a Discipline*

The science of metaphysics which was constituted in the Muslim East on the grounds of al-Kindī's pioneering works and was consolidated by al-Fārābī as an integral part of the Arabic-Islamic sciences, found its school textbook in the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics*.

A clear, and exhaustive account, the *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* is worthy of careful study. First, it is rooted in the teaching of the philosophical schools of Late Antiquity, whose heirs were the first *falāsifa*. Second, it gives us the perspective within which the tradition of the Aristotelian metaphysics in the Arabic-speaking world can be better understood, in its linguistic and doctrinal changes.

In Late Antiquity, a course of philosophical studies put forward and rather quickly canonized, spread through the Neoplatonic schools until it reached the centres of Greek culture of the Near East. It was based on an ordered programme of study which in turn was based on the principle that Aristotle and Plato agreed on the same philosophical truth. The study of the former was conceived as a preparation for that of the latter. In particular, Aristotle's system was completed in its theological conclusions on the basis of the Platonic dialogues. Aristotle's logical works, his works on ethics and politics, and the *Metaphysics* constituted the preparatory study to the dialogues of Plato culminating in the theology of the One in the *Parmenides*.²⁵³

In the school of Athens, for example, Proclus himself had been guided in his philosophical training by Syrianus through two distinct cycles of study: during the first he had completed his study of the works of Aristotle and the *Metaphysics* in particular, while in the second he was guided to learn the higher truth of the Platonic dialogues.²⁵⁴ The same vision of Aristotle's thought as the necessary introduction to Plato was shared by

²⁵³ D'Ancona (2005b), 10–31.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Marinus of Naples, *Life of Proclus Saffrey–Segonds–Luna* §. 13, 15,1–16.10. In less than two years, together with Syrianus, he read all the works of Aristotle, on logic, ethics, politics and physics, and the science which is superior to them, theology (καὶ τὴν ὑπερ ταύτας θεολογικὴν ἐπιστήμην). When he was sufficiently educated in these small mysteries to an inferior degree (διὰ τινῶν προτελείων καὶ μικρῶν μυστηρίων), (Syrianus) led him to the mystagogic doctrine of Plato (εἰς τὴν Πλάτωνος ... μυσταγωγίαν), in order, and without him biting off more than he could chew, gradually, according to the saying of the oracle; he made him participate, with the pure eyes of the soul and the uncontaminated gaze of the intellect, in the initiations of divine nature contained in the works of Plato (τὰς παρ' ἐκείνῳ θείαν ὄντως τελετὰς ἐποπτεύειν ἐποίει).

the school of Alexandria; the anonymous work of a sixth-century professor,²⁵⁵ entitled *Prolegomena to the Philosophy of Plato*, informs us that the Platonic works were read according to the so-called Canon of Iamblichus, culminating in the “perfect dialogues”, namely the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides*, the former being the summary of Plato’s cosmology, and the latter of his theology.

With respect to this method of teaching in the Neoplatonic schools of Late Antiquity, the originality of the first *falāsifa* lay in placing the Neoplatonic thought after Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, in a continuous attempt to demonstrate their compossibility. As we have seen, in fact, the first Arabic interpreters insisted on the fundamental agreement of Aristotle’s metaphysical doctrine with the more general premises of the causalism of the *Timaeus*, but they made the search for principles culminate in the proof of the existence of an immaterial substance eternally in act, which moves without itself moving, acting as the end, which is the supreme intelligible and at the same time the supreme intellect. This principle, which produces the cosmos because it coincides with the set of rational models of all things, is the ruler of the universal order, eternally blessed, simple, One.

In continuity with this exegesis and doctrine, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* shows that in the Muslim East, between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the philosophical education still required that the study of the *Metaphysics* be followed by that of the *De Providentia*, the *Liber de causis*, the *Elements of Theology*, and the pseudo *Theology*.

Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* contains a doctrine which is ontological and at the same time theological, although the relationship between these two aspects remains controversial for contemporary scholars. Following this model, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf also presents a discipline capable of organizing the metaphysical knowledge of the past: for him the metaphysical science, the *ilm mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a*, studies beings *qua* beings, it demonstrates the principles of particular sciences and investigates the First Principle: it is ontology, universal science, first philosophy, and theology.

Its object, however, is not Aristotle’s work in itself, but the set of doctrines whose premises are found in al-Kindī and which reach their maturity with al-Fārābī. Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s concept of *Metaphysics* as a science results from the uninterrupted process of reception, assimilation and transformation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* in the Arabic-speaking

²⁵⁵ Westerink–Trouillard–Segonds (1990).

world. His *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* cannot be understood without bearing in mind al-Kindī's model of the reception of *Metaphysics* with its focus on its aetiological and theological books, let alone without referring to al-Fārābī and his vision of metaphysics as ontology and universal science. In 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's companion the Kindian and Farabian models of metaphysical science survived Avicenna's *Ilāhiyyāt* and are combined with each other in order to provide a clear and comprehensive account of what one should consider as a full-fledged metaphysical system.

The relationship between 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's companion and the set of Greek writings which had been translated or paraphrased in Arabic under al-Kindī's impulse is so close that it has been maintained that from the study of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's text a sort of 'Kindī's metaphysics file' can be reconstructed.²⁵⁶ One can go even further, and safely conclude that he endorses the metaphysical "theologizing" project worked out, by al-Kindī in his *First Philosophy*. For him, as well as for al-Kindī, the knowledge of the causes coincides with that natural theology which investigates the First Principle. The first motionless and perfect principle of *Lambda* is at one and the same time also the True One, Creator and provident.

The *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* also follows in the footsteps of the metaphysical science propounded by al-Fārābī both in *The Aims of the Metaphysics* and in the *Enumeration of the Sciences*, with which 'Abd al-Laṭīf was undoubtedly acquainted, as we learn from the prologue of his companion.²⁵⁷ In al-Fārābī's eyes metaphysics does not equal the science of *tawhīd*, because the metaphysical science has being *qua* being as its object. Thus it is at one and the same time ontology, universal science, first philosophy, and theology.

In his *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* 'Abd al-Laṭīf attempted to gather all the results of the science of metaphysics produced before

²⁵⁶ Zimmermann (1986), 113; D'Ancona (2011), 141–184, corroborates the idea of a set of metaphysical texts which were intended by al-Kindī as a completion of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Through a comparative textual examination of the main contents which were announced in the Prologue of the pseudo-*Theology* with those presented in the main text of the pseudo-*Theology*, the *Liber de causis*, and Alexander of Aphrodisias' *Quaestiones* II.3 and II.19, she suggests that: i. the table of contents announced in the Prologue of the *Theology* is inspired by the structure of the *Elements of Theology*; ii. it is closely connected with the *Liber de causis*; iii. it takes into account at least one of the *Quaestiones* by Alexander of Aphrodisias mentioned above, namely in II.19. Thus it would mean that the Prologue of the pseudo-*Theology* announces a "metaphysics file" which is opened by the pseudo-*Theology*, and it is followed by other texts by Alexander and Proclus.

²⁵⁷ Cf. above 268–293.

him and transmitted through the milieu of the schools. Al-Kindī and al-Fārābī work together to this end without any perception on 'Abd al-Latīf al-Baġdādī's part that a problem might arise: in 'Abd al-Latīf al-Baġdādī's view, the "theologizing" interpretation of Greek metaphysics and al-Fārābī's distinction between theology and ontology coexist.

The system of doctrines thus obtained holds within it solutions to the problems of Greek metaphysics which were originally divergent, and in certain respects irreconcilable. In what is commonly ascribed to Aristotle, the Arab readers found a coherent set of doctrines in which we recognize, besides Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, Plotinus, and Proclus, but which for them represented a single doctrinal complex: the metaphysics of the Greeks.

It is not surprising therefore that 'Abd al-Latīf attributes to Aristotle the *De Providentia*, the *Liber de causis*, the *Elements of Theology*, and the pseudo *Theology*: his goal is to put forward a unitary synthesis, ordered and coherent, of Arabic-Islamic metaphysical thought, whose first teacher was Aristotle.²⁵⁸

Metaphysics counts as an autonomous discipline: the *Metaphysics* is less a text, transmitted through a chain of historical stages, than a discipline to be learnt under the guidance of several teachers, all of them following Aristotle and helping to understand his doctrines: Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, Plotinus, Proclus, al-Kindī and al-Fārābī.

'Abd al-Latīf was certainly not a professional philosopher, but a renowned teacher in Koranic and traditional sciences in the most famous madrasas (*madāris*) of his time at the *al-Azhar* mosque in Cairo, the *al-Aqṣā* mosque in Jerusalem, the *Azīziyya madrasa* in Damascus, and finally in Aleppo. He nonetheless aimed to create a textbook for the study of the science of metaphysics. The readers of this textbook were either those who attended the Islamic schools, in all likelihood conversant with the criticisms levelled against philosophy from al-Ġazālī onwards, or those who cultivated the *falsafā*, whose Avicennian penchant 'Abd al-Latīf wanted to redress.

His didactic style shows his concern to demonstrate the validity of philosophy, and his wish to warn against pseudo-philosophy, alchemy in particular, or against the innovations which might have obscured its original demonstrative force, an example of which he found in Avicenna.

²⁵⁸ This is the opinion of Genequand (1978), 364, where he reviews Neuwirth (1976): "On the whole, the compendium should rather be regarded as representative of that Aristotelian tradition in Islam which remained fairly untainted by the more extreme features of Neoplatonism". For the reasons given above, I cannot share this opinion.

As an expert teacher, he puts forward his arguments in the clearest way possible: in his treatise there are both familiar terms and theological terms in his explanations of metaphysical questions; brief summaries of doctrines and explanations appear regularly throughout his discussion; controversial questions and polemics which in the sources oppose Aristotle and Plato are avoided.

From the point of view of his argumentative technique too, 'Abd al-Laṭīf reveals his conscious assumption of the role of master and presents his arguments in the form of *reductio ad absurdum*. Titles, such as "difficult aporia" or "the most difficult of the aporiai", mark the most difficult points; and the second person singular addresses the hypothetical reader and enlivens the discussion.

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Book on the Science of Metaphysics* has the merit of making us aware of the crucial role played not only by the philosophical circles, but also by many Muslim men of science, who attended the environment of the Islamic schools between the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, in the transmission of the Greek philosophical knowledge, which was originally foreign to Arabic culture, but which in time became essential to the training of the learned Muslim. This is what emerges from the biography and the work of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, even though I believe the question is still open as to when and how the idea of turning to Greek philosophy in the education of the Muslim man of science was abandoned.

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